

George Green's School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 100974 |
| Local Authority | Tower Hamlets |
| Inspection number | 307548 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 September 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Michael Lynes HMI |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Comprehensive |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 1183 |
| Sixth form | 144 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dr Harriett Jones |
| Headteacher | Mrs Kenny Frederick |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 November 2004 |
| School address | 100 Manchester Road Isle of Dogs London E14 3DW |
| Telephone number | 020 7987 6032 |
| Fax number | 020 7538 2316 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

George Green's serves a community subject to high levels of social and economic deprivation. The school is popular, oversubscribed and most of the students join from local primary schools. Higher numbers of students than usual leave and join the school during Years 10 and 11. About half of students are from minority ethnic groups; the largest are of Bangladeshi origin, who make up about a third of the school. However, very few students are at the early stages of learning English.

About a third of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, this is higher than the national average; the numbers with statements of educational need is very high. The largest group have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The school has its own social care team and social worker enabling it to intervene at an early stage and support these students.

The school has been a Humanities college since 2006, specialising in English and citizenship. It has been a training school since 2004 and has Investors in People status. It was awarded Healthy School status in 2005 and offers a wide range of extended services to the local community.

Key for inspection grades

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|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching and learning and the standards that students attain. Senior leaders need to rigorously hold teachers to account for the academic performance of students and develop a culture of higher expectations of both staff and students in all aspects of school life.

Students come to George Green's from a wide range of backgrounds, many with challenging, complex needs. The headteacher is dedicated to ensuring that any barriers related to these circumstances, which might impede learning, are removed. A significant amount of time and resource are devoted to successfully achieving this. As a result, the vast majority of children feel safe and come to school ready to learn. This hard work, which includes developing effective partnerships with outside agencies, provides a solid platform from which students could make real academic progress. However, they do not because this commitment and energy has not had the same impact in improving teaching or tracking academic progress. This is because the systems to monitor progress and the quality of teaching are not rigorous enough. Students do not feel a deep sense of engagement with their own learning and progress is slower than it might be. As a result, standards are low and achievement is inadequate. Although senior leaders realise this, they have not secured the sustained improvements to the quality of teaching which are needed to raise achievement across the school. This has impeded their ability to hold middle managers and teachers fully accountable for examination results.

The school has clearly demonstrated that it does have the capacity to make improvements by raising attendance and reducing exclusions over the past year. Further evidence of this capacity is provided by the recent changes to the curriculum led effectively by the associate headteacher and in the rise in the number of students gaining the higher levels at Key Stage 3. This is as a direct result of effective action taken by middle leaders with the support of senior managers. In addition, a good and improving sixth form demonstrates that there are real strengths in the senior leadership team. The headteacher judges the school's performance honestly and, in most areas, accurately. Governors provide strong challenge and know the school very well.

The school receives significantly higher than average funding, and as a result is able to employ a larger number of staff than is usually found in secondary schools. These staff cater effectively for those students with complex needs and address any behavioural issues around the school quickly. However, adults are not used well enough in the classroom to improve learning. As a result, the school provides poor value for money.

A large number of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. A significant minority had concerns about safety in the playground, behaviour and the quality of leadership and management. Students reported to inspectors that they felt safer inside school than out and behaviour observed during the inspection was generally satisfactory. Teachers' management of behaviour in the classroom is good because relationships are positive and any instances of poor behaviour around the school are dealt with calmly and effectively.

Governors are keenly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are eager to ensure that students get a better deal. The chair leads with insight and is unafraid to challenge senior leaders. She is well supported by her fellow governors. They have worked in partnership

with senior leaders to modify the curriculum and on the very recent appointment of two new deputy headteachers. The local authority has provided effective support and challenge, particularly from the school improvement partner.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Achievement has improved since the last inspection. The school operates an open sixth form and meets the needs of all students successfully, including those with a wide range of complex requirements. Those who enrol from special schools and those with additional needs are well catered for and make good progress. Students on other courses also make good progress. They enter at lower than average levels but reach standards that are broadly average. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use real life examples to engage students. The curriculum is good, being enriched and expanded by the International Baccalaureate and other courses delivered in liaison with partners.

Students enjoy being part of the sixth form and appreciate the range of opportunities on offer. They take part in an effective programme that builds on the curriculum by providing creative activities, sports and service to the school and wider community. Students receive good support and guidance with the vast majority of Year 13 students moving on to the higher education option of their choice.

Leadership and management is good because the head of sixth form has high expectations and a clear focus on achievement informed by regular monitoring and appropriate intervention.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in Key Stages 3 and 4
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning
- Strengthen the ability of senior leaders to hold middle managers and teachers fully to account for the academic performance of students
- Develop a culture of high expectations in all aspects of school life for both staff and students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Students do not achieve enough by the end of Year 9. Standards at the end of Year 11 are significantly below average and have declined since the last inspection, and achievement is inadequate. Evidence provided by the school's monitoring suggests that the achievement of the current Year 11 will be similar to last year.

The school correctly judges that students enter Year 7 with broadly average skills, knowledge and understanding. They achieve significantly below national averages by the end of Year 9 and still well below national averages by the end of Year 11. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress because of the wide range of effective support and care they receive. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 demonstrate that achievement has been inadequate since the last inspection. The unvalidated 2008 Year 9 results indicate that achievement was inadequate in English, mathematics and science. Students made better progress in English and the numbers gaining the higher levels in English, mathematics and science improved. The provisional 2008 GCSE results show a decline in standards from the previous inspection and are below the agreed targets. Achievement is better in the sixth form

and is good across a wide range of courses. This is because expectations of what students should achieve are high and the monitoring of academic progress is more regular and effective.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most students say they enjoy school and feel safe. The student led Anti-Bullying Committee, the enhanced provision to meet the needs of vulnerable students and the knowledge that staff deal with any incidents promptly contribute to this sense of security. Behaviour is satisfactory; however, students can be very boisterous in the corridors and sometimes engage in low level disruption when not fully involved in classroom activities. The school has worked assiduously to improve attendance which is now satisfactory.

Students feel that they are listened to and encouraged to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. Their views are routinely sought and taken seriously, instilling confidence and giving them a sense that they matter. They spoke of how they have helped to improve aspects of the school and that they value opportunities such as being involved in the appointment of staff.

Many students participate in a range of extra curricular and other social and cultural events. The good global links and developing house system contribute to the community spirit including opportunities for students to raise money for a range of charities. They engage positively with others from different cultural backgrounds and have a good understanding of Britain as a diverse society. They understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and there is a good take-up of the healthy options available in the dining hall. However, smoking on the school site remains an issue of concern for the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching is inconsistent so students do not make the progress of which they are capable. This has led to a decline in achievement since the last inspection. At present, the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficiently high enough to arrest this decline and raise standards. The deployment and use of teaching assistants is inconsistent. Whilst they do provide valuable support for students' social and behavioural difficulties they are not used well enough in the classroom to improve learning. Teachers do not give students sufficient guidance on how to improve their work and gain the next level.

In the best lessons teachers use their knowledge of students to plan the next stages of learning. They engage students through active participation and provide appropriate guidance to help them work in groups and on their own. Lessons are pacy and students are praised for their contributions. In a significant number of the lessons observed teachers led without offering students the opportunity to participate. Lessons are sometimes pitched at the wrong level so that students become confused about what is expected of them and learning is not checked frequently enough. Too many teachers have low expectations of students and the pace of lessons is often slow. In these lessons students become passive and are sometimes distracted which leads to low-level disruption.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has taken recent steps to improve the curriculum and it now meets the needs of students more effectively. For example, the grouping of students in Key Stage 3 into sets according to their prior attainment is beginning to cater for the wide range of their needs. In Year 10 the curriculum has been adapted to enable students to gain qualifications in basic skills that will help them with future employment. As a Year 10 student told inspectors, 'They have changed things this year; we get to do better, more interesting things'. The provision for students in Year 11 is less flexible and the changes are yet to have an impact on achievement. The good extra-curricular programme helps to consolidate and add depth to students' learning, and further their interests especially in relation to sport, drama and music. The school's specialist status is beginning to have a positive impact on the curriculum, especially in drama and citizenship. Careers education and guidance at transition points contributes towards students making appropriate option choices. This enables them to have a good insight into the world of work and higher education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Students feel they can seek help when they need it, that staff will respond positively and that any problems will be dealt with effectively. The school has nurtured and developed productive links with outside agencies providing good support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for more vulnerable students. This includes conflict resolution and mediation with families. Procedures for child protection and safeguarding students are good. Health and safety procedures are robust and students know who to turn to if they need help. Provision to make sure students are safe in school from issues such as bullying and racism is robust. Developments to reward and celebrate good behaviour are also showing early signs of a positive impact in reducing exclusions.

The monitoring of students' progress is variable and is not sufficiently rigorous. In general students are aware of their target levels, but assessment information is only just beginning to be used effectively to set realistic targets to ensure that all achieve as well as they can. Students say that the advice they receive on their choice of courses, progression to higher education and future employment is helpful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher ensures that the school provides effective care for all students. As a result the large number of vulnerable students make satisfactory progress. She has put effective systems in place to develop the management and teaching skills of staff but these have not had a consistent impact across the school. In this regard, she has been well supported by senior managers and governors. Procedures to set targets for students that are challenging, but achievable, have only recently been implemented and have not had sufficient impact on raising standards. The judgement of the quality of teaching and learning is overly generous, particularly in identifying teaching that is good or better. The school's management system is not sufficiently rigorous or robust to ensure that teachers are held to account fully for the performance of students.

The headteacher's evaluation of the school's performance is honest and she is working hard to tackle important weaknesses. As a result, attendance has improved, exclusions have reduced, higher attainers are beginning to achieve more and the curriculum has been remodelled. However, some of the resultant actions are not robust enough to ensure sustained improvement in other key areas. Governors are very supportive and provide good challenge; working closely with the senior leadership team they have played an integral part in the recent changes. This partnership has been the catalyst for many of the recent improvements and provides clear evidence of satisfactory capacity to make further progress.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | | |
|---|----------------|-------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall | 16-19 |
|---|----------------|-------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 2 | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 | 2 |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 3 | 2 |

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 | |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 3 | |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 | |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 | |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 4 | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 | 2 |

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 4 | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 | |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 4 | |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 | |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 | |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No | |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | Yes | |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of George Green's School, London, E14 3DW

It was a pleasure to meet and talk to some of you during the inspection. I am writing to let you know what we thought of the school; if you want to read the whole report you can download it from www.ofsted.gov.uk.

It was good to hear that you feel safe at school and enjoy many of the extra opportunities it provides. We could see how hard the school works to look after you, particularly those of you with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Well done to those of you who are now attending more regularly. We were also impressed by the sixth form, which does a really good job of looking after you and helping you to get good results. So well done to all the staff and students in the sixth form!

Although there are some good things about the school, we have judged it to need significant improvement and issued it with a notice to improve. This means that inspectors will come back over the next year to make sure things are improving. We have made this decision because you do not make enough progress in your lessons, and the results in examinations, both in Year 9 and Year 11, are not good enough. We have asked the school to make the following improvements:

- raise examination results in both Year 9 and Year 11
- improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all of you achieve as much as you can
- strengthen how senior leaders support teachers in helping you to make more progress
- raise expectations of what you can achieve.

You have a big part to play in ensuring that the school goes from strength to strength over the next year. Your behaviour, although satisfactory, could be better. You can try to focus more in classrooms and really do your best at all times. Too many of you are 'laid back' in lessons and do not really get involved. You and your teachers need to work on this together.

I have no doubt that many of you will play a full part in making sure your school moves forward quickly, so that when inspectors return they can see a real difference. I wish you the very best of luck and look forward to hearing about your progress.

Yours sincerely

Michael Lynes

Her Majesty's Inspector