

Graveney School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 101058 |
| Local Authority | Wandsworth |
| Inspection number | 307577 |
| Inspection date | 11 December 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Anne Wellham HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 1915 |
| 6th form | 633 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr J Oppenheimer |
| Headteacher | Mr G Stapleton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 October 2002 |
| School address | Welham Road Tooting London SW17 9BU |
| Telephone number | 020 8682 7000 |
| Fax number | 020 8682 7075 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector carried out the inspection. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement in mathematics and science and the sixth form, the match of the curriculum to learners' needs and the quality of care guidance and support. The inspectors gathered evidence from an analysis of data about students' achievements provided by the school, observation of parts of lessons, parents' questionnaires, and discussions with senior staff, subject leaders, the chair of governors, the clerk to the governors, and students. The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These judgements have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

Graveney is one of the largest secondary schools in the country. It serves a culturally and socially diverse community in southwest London. Around half of the students are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is above the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school has technology specialist status and has recently gained the Healthy Eating strand of national Healthy School status and the sportsmark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Graveney is a good school with some outstanding features. It is successful, very popular and has a deservedly good reputation locally. The friendly, purposeful environment reflects the school's core beliefs: respect for the individual, equality of opportunity and the pursuit of excellence. Students have excellent attitudes to learning and are supported well by a committed team of staff and senior leaders. During the inspection, nearly a thousand parents responded to the parental questionnaire with the overwhelming majority recording their support and confidence in the school.

Students begin school with above average levels of attainment. One quarter of students are selected from the higher level of the ability range although there is a considerable range of abilities across the school. Standards are above average at Key Stages 3 and 4, and examination results at GCSE in 2007, including passes at English and mathematics at GCSE grade C and above, were the highest ever. Students make good progress overall relative to their starting points. However, progress in mathematics is broadly satisfactory and achievement in science is not as good as it could be for some students. The school has rightly targeted these as areas for improvement.

Graveney prides itself on its inclusiveness and supports the majority of students exceptionally well. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. As a result, students' personal development and spiritual, moral and cultural development are excellent. Students report how much they enjoy school and that they feel very secure and comfortable with each other and with their teachers. Anti-social behaviour is dealt with rapidly, including any bullying or racist incidents. Students attend school very regularly, behave exceptionally well and know that there is always someone to turn to for help. They are very appreciative of the drop-in counselling provision and are keen to promote the 'respect code' they developed through the school council. One student reflected the view of many students in saying 'We respect that we are different and we can learn from each other'.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Learners make good progress because teachers and support staff have high expectations and students are well motivated, eager to participate and enjoy learning. Although teachers receive information on learners' needs and abilities, they do not always consider these sufficiently when planning lessons.

Most students are active participants in sport and many enjoy the healthy menus in the canteen. Many students support others in the school through their roles as prefects, mentors and sports and charity form leaders. The school council plays an active role in representing students' views. In the wider community, students are generous in their support for a Sri Lankan school hit by the tsunami, in fund raising for a local hospice and hospital, and in supporting fair trade ventures. Enthusiastic musicians provide entertainment for local residents.

The curriculum is broad and responsive to learners' needs and capabilities. There are opportunities to take a second modern foreign language, statistics, separate science subjects at GCSE and additional GCSE qualifications in drama, dance, and Latin for the more academically able students. There are also courses in music and digital information technology after school. Students who would benefit from additional teaching receive extra lesson time for literacy and numeracy, which has contributed to the improved standards at GCSE. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support and make good progress. There is thorough guidance on option choices and pathways for Years 9, 10 and 11. Specialised local college

courses and apprenticeship schemes provide excellent opportunities for students to explore their talents as an alternative to GCSE courses. The teaching assistants who accompany them monitor their progress carefully. There are effective whole-school tracking systems to monitor students' progress regularly and to intervene to support any students doing less well than they should. Most students are aware of their learning targets and know how well they are doing in their efforts to reach them. Links between pastoral and academic staff are seamless. The 'form folder' is a key mechanism through which senior staff monitor students throughout the school day. It is used well and leads to prompt action by key stage coordinators.

The principal, headteacher and experienced senior leadership team are committed to the school and are very successful in raising standards and achievement. They set a clear direction for improvement and have a good appreciation of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has good self-evaluation procedures and these underpin its good capacity to improve. The governing body are supportive of the school. They provide a good level of a challenge to ensure that areas of success are maintained and challenging targets are set to lead to further improvement.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form provides a good education overall with some outstanding features. A high proportion of Year 11 students stay on into the sixth form and are joined by a large number of students from other schools. They are attracted to Graveney because of its excellent academic reputation and because of the welcome they receive from staff and students. They settle in easily and are proud to be part of the school community, which, in turn, benefits from their presence. The sixth form offers a broad, largely academic curriculum that responds to the needs and demands of parents and students. A wide range of subjects is offered to AS and A2 level with one level 2 course in information technology. The school complies with a local agreement to ensure that students with the minimum requirements are entitled to study in the sixth form. Some students find the transition from GCSE to AS difficult. Effective monitoring procedures quickly identify those at risk of underachieving so that support is available. In 2007 AS results were just below the national average and students made satisfactory progress relative to their starting points. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. Results at A2 were outstanding with students making very good progress. A good range of additional studies, including a programme of community studies, prepares students well for university and for adult life. Students' aspirations are high and the majority proceed to university or further education. Students who leave the sixth form after Year 12 receive sound advice and support to follow pathways in further education and training. Very few students fail to complete their courses due to the very effective monitoring procedures and the guidance given. Students report that they value the good quality of teaching and support for their learning. They receive regular and detailed feedback on their progress and the good marking of work informs them of what they need to do to improve. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and set a clear direction for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that improvements to progress in mathematics and science are sustained.
- Ensure that students make the best possible progress at AS.

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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

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | 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 | 2 | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 | |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 | |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | 1 |

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 | |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 | |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | |
| 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? | No | |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Graveney School, London, SW17 9BU

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed hearing your views and visiting some of your lessons. We think Graveney is a good school with some outstanding features. You achieve very good results in examinations and make good progress. We were very impressed with your behaviour and the respect you show each other. Most of you clearly enjoy school. You have opportunities to study many different subjects and to take part in a wide range of interesting activities. You also receive excellent care, support and guidance from the staff. All these things combine to help you to make good progress during your time in the school both academically and personally. Most of your parents care a great deal about your education and do all they can to help you to succeed. The principal, headteacher and senior staff, helped by the governors, lead your school well. They make sure that you are continually encouraged to have high expectations of yourselves and others.

The sixth form is an important part of the school. The sixth formers set a good example for younger students to follow. They work hard and achieve outstanding examination results by the time they leave at the end of Year 13.

Your school is good at identifying ways in which it can improve. We agree with the school leaders that some students could do better in mathematics and science. We have asked them to make sure that this happens. We have also asked the school to make sure that the students who stay on achieve as well as they can in Year 12.

We wish you all at Graveney a very successful future.

Anne Wellham

Her Majesty's Inspector