

Gladesmore Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102157
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	307917
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Gill Close HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Jatinder Kaur
Headteacher	Mr Tony Hartney
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
School address	Crowland Road Tottenham London N15 6EB
Telephone number	020 8800 0884
Fax number	020 8809 8500

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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

Gladesmore Community School serves a very diverse community with over 90% of students coming from an ethnic minority background. The three largest groups are of students with Black Caribbean, Black African, or Turkish/Kurdish heritage, each representing one fifth of the students. Two fifths of students speak English as an additional language, of whom 30 are at an early stage of learning it. About 40 are refugees or asylum seekers. Almost two thirds of students are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. More students than average have learning difficulties or disabilities, with the main ones being behavioural, emotional, social or moderate. There are more boys than girls in each year group. The school has specialist mathematics and computing status, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, Investors in People accreditation, International School status, the Healthy Schools Award and the Artsmark Gold Award. The school provides some adult and family learning programmes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Gladesmore Community School is an outstanding school. It encourages students to 'reach to be a star', and the acronym REACH (which stands for respect, enthusiasm, achievement, cooperation and hard work) is prominently displayed throughout the school and permeates all that it does. There is a real sense of a community working excitedly and successfully together to improve academically and personally. One student summed this up saying, 'When I came to Gladesmore, I expected it to be exciting. It's much better than that. It is exciting, but I also learnt to be helpful and more confident, and the importance of honesty and trust.'

Students from different backgrounds mix and work extremely well together. Relationships between students and with staff are excellent; all members of Gladesmore treat each other with respect. Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students enjoy school immensely and exude enthusiasm for learning, the excellent curriculum and the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities that they keenly take part in. The school's inclusive ethos enables every one of them to feel special. The imaginative range of courses meets the needs of higher attainers and those who need extra support. Because students are exceptionally well looked after and teachers have very high expectations, students have a growing self-confidence in what they can do. Their positive attitudes to learning result in exemplary behaviour, with students listening well to their teachers and each other. This, and an outstanding profile of consistently good and better teaching, help students to make excellent progress. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to involve students in developing their thinking and deepening their understanding. Students' achievement is outstanding. From generally very low starting points, students attain broadly average standards during their time at Gladesmore. The excellent support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are at an early stage of learning English provides them with the access that enables them to make similar progress to their peers.

Students' cooperation with each other and support for each other are exemplary, for example in their excellent contribution to community cohesion in school and beyond, through peer listening and the local anti-gun and knife campaign. Students have many personal targets and some make well-informed assessment of their own progress against them, but not all targets are as subject-specific as they could be to help students improve their work. Staff and students use extremely well the central systems for monitoring effort, behaviour and homework to raise performance, but do not have such efficient information about progress readily available, so the school is currently working to improve this.

Hard work has been at the heart of the school's success, not just in the efforts made by students but also in the labours of the inspirational headteacher and the leaders in establishing such a positive climate for learning with a united staff team that shares their vision for success. This has underpinned the substantial improvements, which demonstrate the school's excellent capacity for continued improvement. Leadership and management are outstanding.

The school's specialisms have contributed enormously to students' enthusiasm for learning. The widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) has helped supplement the school's very rich curriculum and enabled teachers to bring lessons to life, and students' early successes in mathematics have given them greater confidence in tackling other subjects. Specialist status has also brought benefits to the community, such as through family ICT training. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and deservedly praise it highly. They

welcome the constructive partnerships the school has built with them and the wider community. This cooperation also helps encourage families to broaden their children's career horizons as they move on to sixth form studies, university and beyond.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give students greater responsibility for evaluating their progress through a more efficient focus on it in central records and through sharper target setting.
- Increase the proportion of lessons that extend students' thinking and deepen their understanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Students join the school with attainment that is well below average. They make outstanding progress from their low starting points and reach standards that are broadly average. During Key Stage 3, their progress has been consistently outstanding in recent years. At Key Stage 4, progress has been outstanding in English and mathematics. The GCSE results for 2008 indicate that overall progress has risen to outstanding after a small dip and that standards are continuing to rise. The proportion gaining five GCSE grades A* to C has risen to above average whilst standards remain below average when these five subjects include English and mathematics. The school's very inclusive approach has ensured that no group of students makes less than expected progress. There have been substantial improvements in achievement and standards since the last inspection. The school's use of very challenging targets has contributed to this, although not all targets have been met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. They are polite, open and friendly towards staff and visitors to the school. The school's very strong ethos of REACH is at the heart of the school and enthuses students to improve. Students are happy, have a strong sense of belonging, really enjoy school and are rightly proud of it. One student commented that, 'There is always someone who makes us feel we are part of something special.' Rigorous strategies for improving attendance have led to significant improvement so that it is now above average. The school recognises the need to improve punctuality and has introduced systems that are already having a positive effect. Students like their lessons because teachers make learning fun and encourage them to achieve their potential. Mutual respect underpins the outstanding attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around school. Students appreciate the diversity of cultures in the school and the harmonious way in which different groups relate. One student commented that, 'Students are as one'. They feel extremely safe in school and say that bullying is infrequent and dealt with effectively. Students enjoy taking responsibility. The school council provides an effective forum for them to air their views and influence actions taken by the school. Students have taken the initiative to start the 'Value Life', anti-gun and knife crime campaign to reflect their strong sense of community. Students that have problems very much appreciate the great empathy that peer listeners show, and the listeners are rightly very proud of the work they do to support others. Students understand the benefits of leading healthy lifestyles, though not all of them spend the recommended time on physical education. High numbers participate in a wide range of clubs and sporting activities and many of them choose to eat healthily at break

and lunchtime. Students are very well prepared for their future in education and work as they make outstanding progress, work extremely well in teams and gain great confidence through their personal skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Because of this, students do exceptionally well. The school is constantly looking to improve students' chances of success. That determination shows in the well-developed system for checking how teaching effectively supports students' progress. These procedures enable teachers to share and learn from each other's considerable strengths so that ideas and strategies to engage and motivate students are constantly and consistently developed. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection, and a significant proportion was outstanding. These lessons were notable for being dynamic and exciting, engaging students in a range of interesting fast-paced activities and developing their independence through taking responsibility in carrying out group work. In addition, there was expert use of ICT, and relationships were remarkably warm and encouraging, with staff and students listening well to each other. Teachers know their subjects extremely well, and, just as important, all staff know their students' needs and potential, work together well, and provide students with excellent support. This means that students are given challenging goals, made manageable through the inspiration and support they receive. Regular feedback and marking provide important help for students that they appreciate, with the best examples being outstanding. In some lessons, there is room for activities and questioning to encourage deeper understanding and better developed thinking, and for more focused marking and target setting to support this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it is geared sensitively towards the particular needs of individual learners. This enables them to do exceptionally well. The school has developed arrangements that enable students to aim high and to be successful. For example, some students can sit examinations early in mathematics, ICT, statistics and languages to provide them with a genuine challenge, but also to open up possibilities for a wider range of study in later years. For older students who might struggle with a conventional curriculum the provision is similarly imaginative and well thought through. They are able to follow courses, either within school or with other partners, which clearly motivate them and maximise their success. The substantial number of students for whom English is an additional language are outstandingly well-served by arrangements which accelerate their learning and ensure their high achievement. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with very well-focused support in lessons and in small groups or individually. The remarkable range and depth of extra-curricular opportunities is regarded by students as one of the best features of school life. They attend clubs and activities in large numbers, even at weekends, which is testimony to their great appreciation of what the school provides for them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding care, guidance and support enable students to make excellent progress and grow in confidence. Form tutors and heads of year know their students very well and track carefully their personal development and attainment. With learning mentors, they anticipate any potential areas of concern and act before situations arise. In this inclusive school, no student is allowed to slip through the net. The half-termly evaluations of effort, behaviour and homework are combined into a commitment ladder that very effectively raises students' aspirations and outcomes, with rewards for excellence and improvement eagerly pursued. The very good careers advice raises students' expectations. Some targets set with students clarify well what they need to do to improve in a particular subject, but others are less effective. As part of its priority on involving students more effectively in monitoring and enhancing their progress, the school is developing a sharper focus on students' progress in central records and in target setting. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Since the last inspection, a range of strategies has successfully improved attendance to above average. The suspension centre within the school has effectively reduced the number of exclusions and given students positive ways of reflecting upon and changing their behaviour. Vulnerable students receive excellent support in and out of lessons, with carefully planned interventions. Collaboration with outside agencies to support students with additional educational needs is excellent. There is an exemplary range of support through partnership with parents, built on tailored work with specific groups such as Turkish speaking, Somalian and Polish families or father and son groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Inspired by the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, all leaders and managers, staff and governors share a vision of Gladesmore as a beacon within the community to significantly raise opportunities and life chances for students and their families. The school's specialisms have contributed greatly to this, with training in ICT, for example, being offered to local people and with students' early success in mathematics boosting their confidence in other subjects. Success, within both the school and local community, has been built on hugely raised expectations of what every individual can do. With much greater self-confidence and an enthusiasm for learning, students of all abilities are demonstrating increased academic success. Targets set for raised standards year-on-year are ambitious, and not always met because they give staff and students something to reach for. Senior leaders and others with management responsibilities work together effectively in teams to evaluate and plan meticulously for improvement. They have a generally accurate, if sometimes overly modest, view of how well the school is doing. They monitor teaching regularly, and this has helped to drive up the quality of what the school provides, but leaders' lesson observations are not always focused enough on the progress that students make in their learning. Governors are very supportive of the school and are increasingly providing challenge and initiating improvement.

Gladesmore has come a long way since its last inspection but the headteacher and leaders are far from complacent. Their accomplishments to date, coupled with the entire school community's vision and its structures to promote even greater success, show the school's excellent capacity for further improvement.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

21 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Gladesmore Community School, London, N15 6EB

Thank you so much for the way you welcomed us so warmly when we visited your school. You showed us how very much you enjoy and appreciate the school. We had a wonderful time finding out about it and were very moved by the amazing atmosphere in which you are all reaching to be a star and doing extremely well. It was a privilege to spend time with you in school.

Your school is outstanding. Through the excellent, exciting teaching where you work on interesting challenging activities, you make outstanding progress. This helps to bring your standards of attainment up to the national average. The staff care for you exceptionally well. They know you all very well and help you to develop confidence, excellent attitudes to work and exemplary behaviour. Your personal development is outstanding; you get on with each other and with staff extremely well, feel very safe in school, and know how to be healthy. You make an exceptionally good contribution to the school and wider community, such as through peer listeners and the 'Value Life' anti-knife and gun campaign. When you need extra support, staff provide it particularly well. You have an excellent rich variety of courses. You told us that you enjoyed the very wide range of extra-curricular activities that so many of you attend. Your school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher and senior staff who work very well with all staff to make sure that it keeps improving.

The school has excellent plans for continued improvement. We have asked it to help you to understand the work more deeply in more lessons. You can contribute by trying to think hard and asking yourselves 'why?' about things you learn. You and your teachers use the commitment ladder extremely well to help you do better. We have asked the school to help you take more responsibility for assessing your progress by providing sharper subject-specific targets and more efficient computer records of how near you are to your targets. You can play a big part in this when you set yourself targets and think about how well you have met them. We saw that your attendance is above average but sometimes punctuality is not quite so good. To do even better, you can help by making sure you are on time to school and lessons.

On behalf of all of the inspectors, I wish you success at school and in helping your school to become even better.

Yours sincerely,

Gill Close

Her Majesty's Inspector