

Clarendon House Grammar School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	118809
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313098
Inspection date	1 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Samantha Morgan-Price HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School (total)	526
Sixth form	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P Troke
Headteacher	Jane Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2004
School address	Clarendon Gardens Ramsgate CT11 9BB
Telephone number	01843 591074
Fax number	01843 851824

Age group	11–18
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

The achievement particularly of more able students at Key Stage 4 and A-level students.

The effectiveness of student monitoring and assessment for learning (AFL) across the school to raise achievement.

The effectiveness of management actions to raise achievement.

The effectiveness of middle leaders in raising achievement in underperforming subjects.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with the headteacher, other teachers, the chair of governors and students at the school. The inspector also examined documentation and parental surveys. Other aspects of the school's work were not examined in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

The school is a small girls' grammar school. Girls and boys join the sixth form from other local selective and non-selective schools. In September 2004, the school was designated a specialist language college. The school draws students from a wide area. The majority of students are White British; a small proportion are from other ethnic heritages. A smaller than average proportion of students have a learning difficulty and/or disability. The school was awarded the Healthy Schools Status in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Clarendon House is a good school. Students receive good care, guidance and support to achieve exceptionally high standards. The good curriculum, supported by the school's specialist status, enables students to take a good range of modern languages.

Students enter the school with levels of attainments that are well above average. They make good progress to achieve substantially higher than average results in national examinations in Year 9 and at GCSE. The school strives and is ambitious for students' success. Leaders and managers have recognised that girls that are more able do not always achieve their predicted high grades and have started to put clear strategies in place to improve their attainment. Results in Year 9 and GCSE have continued to improve year by year. All students achieve well because care, guidance, support and the curriculum are good.

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Underpinning the school is an atmosphere of respect between students and adults. Students enjoy school and show this through their good behaviour and respect for each other. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good and they have a good appreciation of the global community. They are very keen to be involved in the school's wide range of activities, including some that reflect the school's language specialist status. Students make an outstanding and positive contribution to their community, for example sitting on national councils and running school clubs. The school has worked very hard to improve attendance, which has risen consistently. Attendance is now good.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching does not always provide students with a good platform to achieve their best. Students are motivated and willing to learn and undertake their work diligently. In the best lessons, careful questioning and a range of strategies promote the effective acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. In the less effective lessons, students are not sufficiently stretched or challenged by the tasks set by teachers and lesson objectives are not clear. Planning of work does not always incorporate the needs of the more able students. The monitoring of students' progress is generally good, although the standard of marking of some work does not always provide students with the most useful guidance as to their next steps in learning. Some marked work did not provide any guidance at all.

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of students extremely well. A good range of languages is offered to students from Year 7. One student stated, '...we are special because we will be able to speak more than one language'. Students benefit from a wealth of educational visits as well as visiting speakers. Good extra-curricular opportunities include trips to the Loire Valley in France for all Year 7 students. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now good and enables all students to access the self-taught ICT course. A wide range of lunchtime activities, including Chinese and Latin clubs, enriches students' learning.

Care, guidance and support are good. Students are positive about the effective pastoral support system that contributes to the good school community. Students feel safe in school, supported by the good levels of supervision throughout the day. There are good links with other external agencies so that vulnerable students including children in care achieve well. Systematic whole-school procedures check on students' academic progress well.

The school is well led and managed by a tireless headteacher and a strong senior team. There is a shared sense of purpose that focuses on learning and students, which is also shared by the governing body. Roles and responsibilities are well defined and professional development

opportunities have further enhanced the effectiveness of some managers and teachers. School self-evaluation is accurate, resulting in clear target setting and improvement planning, although the school is aware that improvements in teaching and learning have not been as rapid as expected. With the appointment of a new senior leader responsible for the specialist language colleges, targets in all language subjects are being monitored more effectively, after the school fell short of achieving its targets in 2008. Middle leaders, in the main, understand their roles in improving the school's performance, although not all have brought about timely improvements in their subject's performance. Leaders and managers know where further improvements need to be made. The whole-school focus on improving the high grades at GCSE is having a positive impact in some subjects and the continued and successful drive towards improving attendance has resulted in attendance rates rising. Governors are aware of the school's priorities. Even though accommodation is cramped, the school uses its buildings effectively.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. The school operates an open access policy that enables students with lower GCSE pass rates to secure a place in the sixth form. In 2007 the standards on entry to the sixth form achieved by the students were around national averages; they made satisfactory progress to achieve average results in their A levels. Progress in the sixth form is satisfactory, but not better than that because academic monitoring is less incisive than in the main school, the curriculum is limited and teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge in lessons. Students' personal development is good, and many assume responsible roles within the school, such as mentoring younger students. Students receive effective care and support.

In the past, the process of academic target setting with students was hindering their progress, particularly at A-level, and the monitoring of students' achievement was not undertaken regularly. The new manager of the sixth form has put in place more effective monitoring and support systems that ensure a regular review of students' progress. Student attendance and progression on to A-level courses from AS level have also improved. The number of students who progress into higher education has risen considerably in the last three years. Although the school is part of the Thanet school consortium who are developing diplomas, few vocational pathways are available to students. The impact these measure will have on student achievement is yet to be realised.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of students achieving the higher grades at GCSE and improve achievement in the sixth form by providing more consistently challenging teaching.
- Build the capacity of some subject leaders to ensure they raise achievement in their subject.

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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
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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?	2	3
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	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
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 learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
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	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
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	

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

2 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Clarendon House Grammar School, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9BB

Thank you for welcoming me into your school and for telling me what you thought about the school. I know you enjoy school, especially the opportunities to take more than one language.

I judged the school to be good and the sixth form to be satisfactory overall. You achieve extremely high standards in your national examinations in Year 9 and GCSEs. You make good progress, which is in the main due to the effective care, guidance and support the school provides and the good curriculum on offer. I judged the sixth form to be satisfactory, partly due to many of you not getting the best support needed to raise your achievement as well as the curriculum being quite limited. Lessons across the school and in the sixth form did not always provide you with sufficient challenge to achieve your best work.

You demonstrate good personal development. You make an outstanding contribution to the community and I am aware that some of you hold national positions such as Young Musician Ambassador and that a student sits on the national council for internet safety. Many of you set up and run your own school clubs.

I did identify that there were two points that the school needs to pay particular attention to. I have asked the leaders and managers at the school to:

- ensure that more students achieve the higher grades at GCSE, and that sixth form students improve their A and AS level results by providing more consistently challenging teaching
- ensure that all heads of departments work effectively to improve their department's performance.

I wish you every success.

Samantha Morgan-Price HMI Lead inspector