

Greig City Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133386
Local Authority	NA
Inspection number	319569
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Gill Close HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	948
Sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Taylor
Headteacher	Mr Paul Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2004
Academy address	High Street Hornsey Haringey London N8 7NU
Telephone number	020 8609 0100
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Greig City Academy opened in 2002, sponsored by the London Diocesan Board for Schools and The Greig Trust. It is a Church of England academy that welcomes students from other faiths or none. It serves students from a wide area in Haringey and beyond. It has a very diverse intake with the vast majority of students coming from minority ethnic groups. A quarter of students are from Black Caribbean heritage, a quarter from Black African heritage and one eighth from Other White backgrounds. One half speaks a first language other than English, a very high proportion, with one in ten of these students being at an early stage of learning English. More than two fifths are eligible for free school meals, which is a high proportion. There is an average proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but fewer than average with a statement of special educational needs. The majority of difficulties are moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Each year group has a higher proportion of boys than girls: there are five boys for every three girls. The academy has a specialism in technology, including information and communication technology (ICT). It gained Investors in People status in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the academy

Grade: 2

Greig City Academy provides a good education. The inspirational principal has built a strong, dedicated team of staff who share the vision to raise students' achievement. They work together with great enthusiasm and commitment to the students, often supporting them well beyond the school day. The good-quality care, guidance and support they provide build students' self-esteem and raise their aspirations. In turn, this encourages them to attend well, behave well and work hard. Together with the teaching in and outside the classroom, this helps the students to learn well and make good progress. Parents praise the academy highly. They comment on the extensive efforts staff have taken to support their children. A few consider their views could be taken into account more fully.

Although standards are below average at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, they have risen markedly since the last inspection. In 2008 30% of students achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics, a substantial increase. This rise followed a well-placed focus on English and mathematics that resulted in students making good progress in these subjects, and overall. Nevertheless, standards remain below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT, and low levels of literacy and numeracy hold students back. The good quality of support they are given enables students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with a first language other than English, to make good progress. Teaching and learning are good overall, but in some lessons assessment is not used sufficiently well to provide activities or detailed targets that challenge everyone. Sometimes students do not develop independent learning skills because they spend too long listening, with little opportunity to participate in tasks. Leaders and managers have observed lessons and used this to improve teaching quality, although monitoring has not been rigorously enough focused on students' progress to raise all teaching to good.

Personal development and well-being are good, as is students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships between students and with staff are good. These are strengthened through the many enrichment and support activities that enhance the good curriculum. Of particular note are the many residential outdoor learning trips that the majority of students have experienced. These contribute to good community cohesion by bringing students into contact with people from different backgrounds.

Good leadership and management have led to year-on-year improvement and accurate identification of the key areas for development. The academy has good capacity to improve. Although planning is good, some does not include sufficiently explicit or measurable criteria to evaluate how successful actions have been. All students benefit from the facilities that the specialism in ICT provides, although they do not all study it as a separate subject during Key Stage 4. The academy provides ICT teaching for the community and local schools, and plans to extend this.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is an exciting place to be. Students comment that they very much enjoy the wide range of experiences it offers them. They appreciate the excellent care, guidance and support that staff provide, which helps them to set themselves high aspirations and targets. It is this meticulous attention to the personal development and progress of every student, founded

on thorough knowledge of them all, that enables them to do so well, and for many to gain the qualifications they need to go on to university.

Students make good progress, although standards remain below average because of their low starting points. Attainment is gradually rising and progress is becoming more consistent across courses and subjects, particularly at A level where it had been variable. The outstanding support and weekly checks on students' progress ensure the very high completion rate for courses at Levels 2 and 3. A strength of the provision is the vocational courses, in which some excellent teaching and individual challenge ensure that each student does very well. The good curriculum is broad and balanced, supported by very high-quality enrichment, including advice for future careers. Teaching is good.

Students gain immensely in confidence and self-esteem. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding. They contribute extensively to the school and show great commitment in the way they support the younger students as mentors, reading buddies, sports coaches and on residential trips. Good leadership and management convey the outstanding commitment to the students' success that has led to significant improvements. Staff work together effectively to address the development needs they have identified.

What the academy should do to improve further

- Raise standards and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, ICT and in literacy and numeracy to better equip students for their futures.
- Improve teaching and learning, making better use of assessment and detailed targets to challenge all students, and engaging them in more interactive learning to enhance their independence.
- Focus lesson-monitoring and strategic plans more sharply to improve teaching and evaluate the impact of actions, through increased emphasis on students' progress, explicit targets and measurable success criteria.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry is well below average, as are literacy and numeracy levels. Until 2007 standards at the end of Key Stage 4 were exceptionally low in English and mathematics, and students' progress in mathematics was very low. In 2008 the academy increased its focus on raising standards in these subjects. This successfully enabled students to improve their rate of progress in English and mathematics to good, and to reach better, although still below-average, standards. It also raised overall standards from being exceptionally low to below average, with 30% of students achieving at least five GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics. The academy's data show that current students are on track to make similar progress and reach higher standards. Progress and achievement are good. In the last three years students' progress in their best eight subjects has been in the top 10% nationally, which is excellent, although it varies between subjects and has only risen recently in mathematics and English. These results represent a marked improvement in standards and progress since the last inspection. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go to bring standards up to national averages. Students' low levels of literacy and numeracy hamper their access to learning, choice of courses and future opportunities. Standards in science and ICT are also below average.

At Key Stage 3, standards have risen markedly from exceptionally low levels at the last inspection in mathematics and science, although they are still below average. In English, where they were

below average, they rose substantially in 2008 and met the academy's targets. Students make good progress despite standards still being below average.

The good quality of care and support ensures that all groups of students make good progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well. Students with a first language other than English make faster progress than others and reach higher standards. Students eligible for free school meals attain standards similar to other students and significantly above their group nationally.

Students embark on Level 3 courses in the sixth form with substantially below-average attainment. Standards were exceptionally low in 2007. Last year students made very good progress in most vocational subjects but too many did not do well enough at A level. As a result of improved teaching and monitoring, students are now making good progress and are on track to reach better standards, although these are still likely to be below average. Students have a good completion rate for courses at Level 3 and many of them continue to university. Those who take Level 2 courses also do well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form, where students take on many responsibilities. They support younger students in the main school extremely well.

Students enjoy coming to the academy and taking part in a good range of enrichment activities. The academy has worked effectively to improve its attendance, which is now above average. Students' behaviour is good. Relationships among students are harmonious. They report that bullying is very rare, and when it does occur, they know it is taken seriously and dealt with promptly. Students feel safe and well supported by staff.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear sense of fairness and respect the views of others. Their cultural awareness is strong because students' diverse backgrounds are reflected in the work they do. Students participate in the rich programme of visits in Britain and abroad, which widens their knowledge of the world. Their ability to reflect was very much evident in the assembly in Year 9 where they had to think about people who are less fortunate than themselves.

Students understand the importance of healthy lifestyles well. A large number take part in sporting activities and the lunches have been improved at their request. After a break, the school council has recently been reformed, and students take pride in making their voices heard in the academy. They know that their views are listened to and acted upon in improving the environment. However, few students have opportunities to participate in the democratic processes of decision-making or to take on responsibilities. Students acquire good attitudes, skills and workplace experience that will support them well through the next stage of their education and in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The impact of all teaching in and outside the classroom, combined with the academy's successful drive to raise motivation and aspirations promotes good learning, enabling students to make good progress. Students work hard and have a good attitude to learning, keenly following up the additional help offered. However, in lessons teaching is not consistently inspirational or vibrant across all subject areas. In the best lessons high expectations, challenging, varied tasks and skilful open-ended questioning move learning forward rapidly. Students clearly enjoy such lessons. When teaching is more mundane, students do not make the progress of which they are capable. Good relationships between teachers and students and between students are a feature of lessons, ensuring good behaviour and setting a positive climate for learning. On the occasions when behaviour slips in lessons, it is related to the lengthy time spent by teachers on explanations that give students too little opportunity to participate. As a result, students remain very passive, so that engagement and enjoyment are impaired, and they do not develop independent learning skills. Teachers plan their lessons assiduously, but in some lessons observed the chosen tasks did not meet the full range of students' learning needs. When extension activities were observed, they were often insufficiently demanding and could only be accessed after the whole class activities had been completed. Students' target-setting is related to GCSE grades or National Curriculum levels, but not regularly translated into small steps, so that students know how to advance their learning. Marking is variable and often comprises ticks, with a one or two word comment, lacking the constructive support and reference to previously set targets to give students a clear view of how to improve and extend their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good, providing well for the diverse needs and interests of the students at the academy. It is broad and balanced in all key stages. However, for the students with low levels of literacy, access to the curriculum continues to be impeded. The various strands of the academy's recently introduced literacy policy are not yet sufficiently embedded across the curriculum to raise standards in reading, discussion and writing. A similar emphasis to raise standards in numeracy does not permeate whole-academy initiatives. Language proficiency for students at the early stages of learning English is promoted well, so they learn rapidly.

The introduction of a free choice of options for students at the beginning of Year 10 has been effective in raising motivation and the desire to succeed. Year 11 students are well supported through the raising achievement programme, focused on examination success and complementing the strong systems of mentoring which operate throughout the academy. In Key Stage 5 opportunities to study Level 2 and 3 vocational subjects alongside a wide choice of A-level subjects has had a very positive impact in increasing the number of students who choose to remain at the academy for their sixth form studies. There is extensive work-related learning provision. In Year 10 students spend two weeks in placements in their second term. Careful in-house preparation and follow-up of these placements ensure that they are fully integrated into the curriculum. In every year all students use ICT well to support their learning, although not all students study it as a subject during Key Stage 4. The high-quality enrichment activities, particularly the extensive outdoor learning programme in which very many students

participate, make an extremely positive contribution to students' learning. The curriculum is further enhanced by a range of popular extra-curricular activities, especially in sport, music, drama and public speaking.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

In the main academy the quality of care, guidance and support is good. It has a significant impact on students' well-being and personal development. In the sixth form it is outstanding.

The academy is vigilant about health and safety and child protection matters. The curriculum pays good attention to the development of safe and healthy life styles. There are good support systems that nurture students' personal and academic achievement. For example, the academy offers a range of small group teaching, before and after school clubs, and revision classes that provide good subject support. Learning mentors, form tutors and pupil progress managers know their students very well and monitor their academic as well as personal development systematically. There are clear expectations of work, behaviour and overall progress which are tracked well. Much intervention and support is based well on this tracking, but there are some inconsistencies across the academy in how well tracking is used to plan lessons to meet each student's needs. While support is well focused, lessons, assessment and students' planners are not used effectively to monitor progress on students' specific areas for development in each subject.

The academy's arrangements to help students make a smooth transition from primary to secondary school are effective because of its strong links and thorough gathering of information on prospective Year 7 students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support tailored to their needs. Additional support for students who are at the early stages of learning English is good. This helps them to make rapid progress in English and achieve well. Students feel well informed when making choices of GCSE courses. They have good access to careers advice and guidance. Although the academy provides a good range of specialist support, there is room for more links with outside agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The principal is a charismatic leader who makes a significant impact on the life of the academy. His aim of providing a community in which all are recognised for their talents and supported to achieve the best they can underpins the work of the academy. Sixth form students told inspectors that they think he is an outstanding role model for them and challenges them to do their very best. The pastoral systems have been developed to enable this vision to be implemented and staff work together effectively to achieve it. The quality of the academy's management and development of staff has been recognised through the award of Investors in People status. Since the last inspection, the good improvement in attendance, behaviour and tracking has contributed to the substantial raising of students' progress and standards.

Self-evaluation is accurate in identifying the overall quality of provision and areas for development. Although strategic planning is good overall, the best practice is not consistently applied across all subjects and areas. Some targets are not clearly identified or are too general for measuring achievement against them. The monitoring of teaching has led to improvement,

but it is not focused rigorously enough on students' progress to ensure that teaching in all lessons enables all students to do their best. Senior and middle management is increasingly effective, although there remains variability. Governors understand the academy well and collect evidence about its performance during visits. This has effectively informed the challenge and support they provide, which have helped the academy to improve. Governors are developing their roles and links further.

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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	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	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
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	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2	1

Leadership and management

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 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**

02 April 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Greig City Academy, London, N8 7NU

Thank you for your very warm welcome when we visited the academy. You told us about the many things you enjoy at the academy. We could see this and how well everyone gets on with each other.

We found that the academy gives you a good education. The staff know everyone very well. They encourage you to raise your aspirations and achieve your best. They often help out before and after school with many interesting activities, including excellent outdoor education residential trips. In the sixth form the outstanding way staff care for you enables many of you to finish courses and do well. Sixth-formers also support younger students in many ways, for example with reading. We think that younger students could have more opportunities to take responsibility.

The principal and senior staff lead the school well, so it has improved. You are making good progress, but it would be good if examination results went up further to help you get into more jobs and college or university courses. The teaching and extra support help you to do well, but some lessons do not challenge you all to think hard or give you enough activities to do. You do not always have targets in small steps to help you improve. Your good attendance and behaviour and your hard work also make a big difference to your achievement.

We have asked the academy to do three things to make it even better. They are:

- to raise standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT, literacy and numeracy
- to make sure that work in lessons suits your individual needs to help you meet your next target and actively involves you
- to make sure that improvements are made quickly, by checking lessons and the academy's planning for the future.

You can play your part by working hard, thinking how well you are meeting your targets and joining in during lessons.

We wish you success at school and in helping it to improve further.

Yours faithfully

Gill Close

Her Majesty's Inspector