

Crown Woods School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100189
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	335499
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	David Scott

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1450
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trevor Taylor
Headteacher	Mr Michael Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2006
School address	Riefield Road Eltham London SE9 2QN
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 42 lessons, and had meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans, school policies and 32 parental questionnaires. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following aspects.

- The impact of the quality of learning in lessons on students' attainment.
- How well the school is using assessment data to secure improvement for all groups of students.
- The provision for more-able students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact of leaders and managers, at all levels, on driving improvements across all key stages.

Information about the school

Crown Woods School is larger than average and has significantly more boys in each year group than girls. A new school is currently being built on site and is due to open in April 2011. As part of the local authority's planned reduction in the school roll, it is currently undersubscribed. As a result, compared to the national picture, a high proportion of students joins and leaves the school throughout the year. The school has specialist humanities status. Since the previous inspection it has gained the Healthy Schools Standard and has been successively re-designated as an Investor in People for the third successive occasion.

The majority of students are of White British heritage, although over a third are from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The school serves a community facing increasingly difficult economic and social challenges. In the main school, over a quarter of students, much higher than the national average, are eligible for free school meals. In the sixth form, a third of all students are in receipt of the educational maintenance allowance. Nearly a quarter of students, a much higher proportion than that found nationally, have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the largest group being those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is twice the national average.

The school hosts units for students with visual impairment and for some with moderate learning difficulties, together with a specialist on-site pupil referral unit. The school is part of an extended schools cluster providing a range of family learning services.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Crown Woods School provides a good standard of education, and one that is improving under the positive leadership of the headteacher. Since the last inspection, it has built on its strengths and developed new ones, including improving its specialist area of humanities and the planning and building of a new school. It is driving up students' academic performance and sustaining good practice in supporting their personal development. As one parent commented, echoing the views of many, 'My child has made excellent progress since joining Crown Woods. I would recommend the school to other parents.'

Students achieve well in their learning because the school has very high expectations of them, and also of staff. It has been effective in closing the gap in performance in most subjects. In reaching average standards in 2009, the proportion of the students gaining five or more higher GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, rose by 18% over a three year period. The school is determined that all students should be enabled to fulfil their dreams by 'exceeding their expectations'. Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory but rapidly improving.

The school has brought about these improvements because of the robust way in which senior leaders and many middle managers have tackled students' underperformance, weaknesses in teaching and the management of behaviour. As a result, teaching and learning are good throughout the school. There are examples of good assessment practice, although the quality across subjects is variable. This is because, in some lessons, activities and questioning are not always finely matched to students' varied needs. Behaviour throughout the school is good with students responding positively to the school's high expectations. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

Despite good teaching, a stimulating curriculum and outstanding care and support, not all students attend regularly. All staff demonstrate a very strong commitment to ensure that every student has an equal chance to learn and succeed, but some students hamper their own chances by regular lateness to school and by non-attendance. The school has done much to improve attendance which is now close to average, but not all parents and students have clearly understood that extended holidays in term-time affect learning. The school has striven hard to engage parents and carers in the students' learning.

All staff follow a rigorous cycle of departmental review, validated by external consultants. Self-evaluation is thorough, honest and accurate. Since the last inspection the school has raised attainment, accelerated progress and reduced exclusions. These

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demonstrate that the school has strong capacity to make further improvements and fulfil its ambitious vision for the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and use of assessment, including in the sixth form, so that they are more consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers use day-to-day assessments to provide activities that are challenging and carefully matched to students' varied needs, and to signpost clearly students' 'next steps'
 - making questioning more probing in lessons to give students opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully and enable them to be more responsible for their own learning, particularly for more-able students
 - intensifying the programme for spreading good practice in assessment throughout the school, by coaching and mentoring.
- Work more intensively with families to improve attendance and punctuality by:
 - ensuring students do not take extended breaks in term-time and only take time off school for serious illness
 - developing further worthwhile rewards for consistently good punctuality and attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Learning and progress in lessons are good. Students are motivated to learn because of the good relationships with staff and each other. Their positive behaviour and real desire to improve contribute very effectively to their learning. Most of those who previously demonstrated challenging behaviour have bought into the school's drive to help students achieve. The school has been successful in encouraging students to engage more actively with their learning. This was very evident in a good Year 12 English lesson where students were using magazine adverts to see how images could be used to entice potential purchasers. They then analysed how their own essays could be improved by developing their understanding of examination criteria and by comparing their answers with each other. Similarly, in a good Year 8 music lesson, students showed great enthusiasm for singing a popular song in three parts, with a melody, bass line and chordal accompaniment.

Students' progress accelerates as they move through the school between Years 7 and 11 because of improvements in their communication skills, both spoken and written, and in their self-confidence. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, both from on-site units and within the main school, make good progress, as a result of well-focused guidance and help. Boys and girls, and students from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress.

Outcomes in the specialist humanities subjects are improving and make a significant

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contribution to helping students gain effective life skills that prepare them well for education, training and employment. Many students are keen to take on responsibilities and report the value of the active school council in getting things done. They are proud of their success, for example in taking assemblies, and have been fully involved and consulted in the planning and design of their new college. In discussions, students demonstrated a good understanding of how to stay safe and they reported that they feel very safe in school. Through the work associated with the national awards, students have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and participating enthusiastically in sporting activities and physical pursuits. Students make a good contribution to their local community by acting as sports leaders to 17 primary schools and contribute more widely through Crown Wood's partnership with schools and charities overseas in China, Uganda, Malawi and Tanzania.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is improving due to more rigorous monitoring and is good with a few lessons being outstanding. Relationships between staff and students are good and subject

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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knowledge is strong so explanations are well-structured and confident. New technology, where available, is used well to make the lessons interesting. However, occasionally teachers' explanations are too long which reduces the opportunity for students to think for themselves and explain their ideas, so the pace of learning slows. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in lessons because teaching assistants are deployed appropriately. A real strength on which the school can build is the effective use of assessment to drive up standards within the humanities specialism, particularly English, and also in mathematics. However, elsewhere marking and target-setting do not always signpost clearly how the students can improve their work, and questions are not always sufficiently probing, particularly for more-able students.

The well-orchestrated curriculum has recently been redesigned to meet the needs and interests of all learners. Students experience a wide range of activities which are enriched further by over 100 trips and visits per year involving students of all ages. Exciting work experience placements, guest speakers, theatrical productions, dance extravaganzas and clubs ranging from African drumming to tag rugby all contribute strongly to students' enthusiasm for school life. This enrichment, together with visits to sporting events and overseas trips to Abu Dhabi, Canada and Cyprus, provides excellent opportunities for students to broaden their personal and academic skills. However, senior staff acknowledge that the provision for vocational pathways is not as strong, particularly in the sixth form.

The school is rightly proud of its outstanding care, guidance and support. Students from the on-site units are effectively integrated and supported in lessons. The most vulnerable students benefit greatly from excellent work the school carries out with external agencies. Staff can point to real successes in helping students overcome difficult histories and challenging episodes in their lives. 'The school has helped me to work on my own and made me more confident so that my friends and family can see the change', commented one student. The inclusion team provides a wide range of support to enable vulnerable students to play a full part in school life and is increasingly successful at engaging hard-to-reach families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>2</p>
	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>1</p>

How effective are leadership and management?

Progress and learning are accelerating at Crown Woods because of the determination of

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the headteacher, with the support of all staff, to ensure that students leave school with the necessary skills to unlock their potential. The headteacher and his senior leaders know the strengths of the school well. Their vision to improve achievement for all students has created confidence and a real sense of purpose throughout the school and among parents and carers. As a result, staff morale and commitment to the school is of high order.

The school has strong and comprehensive data about students' performance, which it analyses effectively. It recognises that with the expansion of data, systems for recording it do not all lend themselves to efficient and rapid analysis. Systems for target-setting to raise academic achievement are increasingly challenging, with an even greater emphasis on higher expectations for all students. The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that every student has an equal chance to learn. It works hard to eradicate any differences in the achievement of groups of students. Senior leaders guide staff so that equality of opportunity and inclusion are effective, but recognise that occasionally, although improving, the most-able pupils do not do as well as other groups of learners. Governors are fully supportive of the school's aims. They visit the school often and have an accurate view of its performance. They challenge the school and hold it to account and are securing more rapid improvement in the quality of learning. The school has comprehensive and robust procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. Systems to keep students safe meet all government guidelines and requirements. The school has evaluated its contribution to community cohesion, which is good. This has been achieved by developing and promoting a detailed understanding of its own community and the different faiths, ethnicities and cultures that exist within it. The school's international links promote good awareness of global issues. Through its specialism it has been enterprising and successful in developing partnerships with other schools and local universities, for example in the training of new teachers.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Sixth form

'All members of staff do their best to make the school a better place for everyone. The headteacher is very understanding and has an open-door policy', commented a group of sixth form students, echoing the view of most and reflecting the school's efforts to provide a truly inclusive sixth form. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The rate of progress is accelerating and the large majority of students are on track to meet their challenging targets. Students are particularly successful in the school's specialist subjects, especially English, and in vocational courses.

The sixth form is enthusiastically led by a member of the senior leadership team. As a result of more rigorous monitoring, teaching and learning are now consistently good, and almost all students complete their courses to proceed to further education and training, but there has not yet been sufficient time for improvements to have had a full impact on outcomes. Numbers in the sixth form are rising with almost two thirds of Year 11 students staying on. Each student's progress is meticulously tracked and remedial action is promptly taken if there are signs that a student is losing momentum or struggling in any way. Students consider that they get constructive, useful feedback on their major written tasks. However, the quality of the day-to-day marking of their work varies between subjects and not all students are clear about how close they are to reaching their targets.

Through the consortium, the attractive curriculum on offer successfully meets the current needs of most students. Plans are well-advanced to increase vocational courses as the sixth form expands. Sixth-formers make an increasingly positive contribution to the life of the school, for example, by helping to run clubs for younger students and they undertake voluntary work in the local community through the Millennium Volunteers scheme. There is a strong ethos of care and support and students say they feel very well looked after.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents who returned

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questionnaires, although the return was a low proportion. Almost all respondents were very positive about the school and felt that it keeps students safe and helps them maintain a healthy lifestyle. A few parents raised concerns over behaviour, homework and communication with the school. Inspectors discussed these issues with senior staff and found there to be effective procedures in place to deal with these areas of concern. Inspectors were also shown evidence of the school's own recent surveys of parents' views and these too were wholly positive.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Crown Woods School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,450 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	41	17	53	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	34	18	56	2	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	31	18	56	3	9	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	50	11	34	4	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	28	18	56	4	13	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	34	14	44	6	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	19	20	63	4	13	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	38	13	41	3	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	28	17	53	5	16	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	16	20	63	3	9	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	16	18	56	6	19	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	10	31	16	50	4	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	31	17	53	4	13	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Crown Woods School, Eltham, SE9 2QN

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work and at leisure. We valued the discussions we had with you and I would like to take this opportunity to share our findings with you.

We judge your school is good, and is steadily improving. Your headteacher and all the staff are totally committed to making it a welcoming place. Inspectors were particularly impressed by the way you get along and respect each other's different cultures and traditions. We were also delighted to see your new college being built and hearing the significant contribution you have made to its innovative design. You and your parents told us that you like school and that it is a very caring and happy place where you feel totally safe. Your headteacher and teachers are determined to help you succeed and give you the best possible start in life, so we have asked them to:

- plan work that will challenge and engage you in all lessons, including in the sixth form, and show you ways to learn by yourselves, particularly the more-able among you
- give you clearer advice on how to improve your work so that you can achieve your very best
- make sure you all attend as well as possible, and arrive at your lessons on time.

You and your families can help by not taking extended holidays in term-time, only missing school when you are particularly ill and by arriving on time ready for school in the morning.

Once again, it was very good to meet you all. We wish you and the school all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Scott

Lead inspector

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