

Hackney Free and Parochial Church of England Secondary School Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100284
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	335518
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Adrian Lyons HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	745
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Robert Wickham
Headteacher	Mr Richard Brown
Date of previous school inspection	0 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation, governors' minutes, external reports, school publications, staff questionnaires, 84 student questionnaires and 131 parental questionnaires.

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

- how effective assessment is for learning
- how effectively students are guided and supported through the use of data
- how well the ethos of the school supports the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school with more boys than girls. It serves an inner city area with above-average student mobility. Over three quarters of its students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being Black African and Black Caribbean. Just over half the students are eligible for free school meals and approximately half speak English as an additional language. The school has a considerably higher than average proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is a specialist sports college and full service extended school

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hackney Free and Parochial School has provided education for the children of Hackney in a Christian environment for nearly 500 years. Its education remains free but is in no way parochial. Today it provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. While many aspects of its work and outcomes for students are at least good and sometimes outstanding, the attainment of students by the time they leave Year 11 has been low. Over the last year standards have been raised and students' progress has improved so that achievement is now satisfactory. Through externally moderated school and local authority data, inspectors found strong evidence of continuing improvement and good capacity to improve academic achievement much further. The school's accurate and very honest self-evaluation, coupled with the vision, determination and ability of the headteacher and senior leadership team, are further indicators of the school's great potential to be good. However, the progress of students as a whole is currently only satisfactory because the quality of learning in lessons, while often good, is too variable. In turn, middle leadership varies in its capacity to improve the quality of provision in different subjects.

In order to succeed from their low starting points, students need to make accelerated progress supported by consistently good teaching. Around half the teaching seen was only satisfactory. The quality of assessment is variable. A number of teachers are very skilled at framing their questions and eliciting thoughtful responses from the students, but students' responses are weaker when the questioning is purely about factual matters, or when teachers jump in with their own solutions too quickly. The frequency and quality of marking are variable but generally not enough attention is given to comments that provide clear information to students on how to improve their work. Self-assessment and peer assessment are developing but opportunities were missed to develop these aspects of learning in a number of the lessons observed.

Students, parents and staff are extremely positive about the school. In questionnaires, 96% of staff were proud of the school and 95% of the students said they enjoyed school. One student took the trouble to explain that the reason he ticked 'strongly agree' for 'adults who care about me' is because the head of year 'has a lot of faith in my abilities and' also encourages the entire year to do their best and believes every one of us can get all of our GCSEs'.

Children of different religions feel at home in an environment where all are respected. The quality of care, guidance and support for students is indeed outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and, given the challenges of the local environment, the school provides a safe haven. Through initiatives such as litter collection it supports its local community. Staff show a high level of regard for students'

welfare. This is very much appreciated by the students, who feel that they always have someone to turn to if they are troubled. Students feel safe because of the effective walkabout team who patrol the school. In lessons and around the school students behave very well and have good attitudes to their work. The many school leaders appointed from among the students set an excellent example and make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. In just a few lessons, students do not exercise sufficient self-discipline.

Through the sports specialism students participate in high levels of physical exercise and healthy food is provided by the canteen. As a result students' adoption of healthy lifestyles is excellent. The school has been exceptionally effective in its communication with parents through newsletters and the website but also through headteacher surgeries and by adapting times of meetings to make it easier for parents to attend. The school has worked hard to raise the aspirations of students. However, in lessons, teachers' expectations of what the more able students can do are too often not high enough. There have been some good developments in provision for the economic aspects of work-related learning, including lessons on money in the lower years. However, the school recognises that there is further to go in creating a coherent programme that develops enterprise skills and financial capability to prepare students more fully for adult life.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better to accelerate students' progress by:
- improving the quality of questioning, marking and information on how students can improve their work
- having sharper lesson objectives
- matching work more closely to students' ability and especially stretching the most able.
- Improve middle leadership to ensure consistently good practice across and within departments.
- Build on the good work in raising aspirations to provide more comprehensive education for economic well-being, including financial capability.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students say they enjoy being at school, and this was clear from the lessons seen during the inspection, although progress was satisfactory rather than good in too many lessons. Teachers have worked hard to ensure their classrooms are good learning environments. Their tidiness creates a sense of order and the good quality displays reinforce students' learning, for example by indicating to them how they can improve the standards of their work. In most classrooms there is a good learning atmosphere that results from the very good quality of the relationships that teachers have established with and among their students. There is a good level of consistency in the

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

use of basic routines for classroom teaching. The result is that students are generally clear about the purposes of lessons, and this contributes to their levels of engagement. However, a few lessons do not get off to a brisk enough start, and the lack of consistency in the match of tasks and support to students' needs means that while those with special educational needs and/or disabilities tend to make good progress, the more able students are not always sufficiently challenged to do well.

Students begin school with academic standards that are low and few have achieved the highest levels of attainment in Year 6. Over recent years the proportion of students gaining good GCSE passes has varied considerably but has always been well below the national average. In 2009, 31% of students achieved five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics. This was below average but represented a substantial increase on 2008. The improvement was brought about by effective strategies used over a short period of time. The current Year 11 students have had more time to benefit from these strategies to boost achievement. Inspectors found evidence that students in the current Year 11 are reaching similar standards to those found nationally. The improvement in the proportion of students gaining top grades is the result of targeted support for particular groups and improvements in teaching and learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers increasingly use methods that encourage students to think for themselves and discuss their views, in groups and in the whole class. This is making an important contribution to students' self-confidence and their oral skills. This was very well demonstrated in a Year 11 lesson on a poem in which students made extended contributions that were carefully listened to by their classmates. Teachers have good subject knowledge. The use of interactive whiteboards is a staple part of lessons: they help to clarify the purpose of the lesson and provide a valuable stimulus to engage the students. Teachers routinely specify learning outcomes for their lessons, although this is not done consistently well. In many lessons the outcomes are confused with activities or else stated so broadly that they cannot be used to evaluate how well the students have learned.

In many classrooms teaching assistants make an important contribution to students' learning as they have a clear role and understanding of the purposes of the lesson. This is still not true for all classes. Teachers are aware of the need to match work to the differing levels of ability in their classes and usually plan for this. In practice, the slower learners are better supported than the more able learners, who are not given more challenging tasks frequently enough.

The curriculum is increasingly well matched to the needs of students. It has been considerably improved over the past year. Tracking data suggest an impressive rise in prospective GCSE results. A significant contribution to this comes from changing the mathematics curriculum and introducing a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) course in science to improve the achievement of students who are close to, but not quite attaining, a C grade. Attainment in physical education is also being promoted by providing extra time for the subject in Key Stage 4. The school is moving steadily towards a more personalised curriculum that will engage all learners; for example, 12 students, alienated from the traditional curriculum, have their entire education based at the London Boxing Academy. New vocational diplomas have been introduced. The students' good attendance testifies to their enjoyment of what the school offers. The school provides a good range of popular after-school activities, not least in sport but also including music. The majority of students participate in these activities, which add much to their enjoyment of school. The school provides a range of out-of-school classes that help to boost achievement. In Key Stage 3, the placing of students with low literacy skills into specific groups has had a dramatic and positive impact on their reading ability. The introduction of a learning skills programme, which now covers Years 7 and 8, is having a positive effect on the capacity of students to learn independently.

The exceptional quality of care is an outstanding feature of the school. It has well-developed systems to ensure the successful induction of new students into the school. The quality of its approach to guidance for students in Year 9 is shown by the low numbers who have to change courses after their entry into Year 10. The school supports students moving onto post-16 placements by the innovative practice of appointing a head of sixth form to work with the Hackney Community College. Also,

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teachers from the school maintain continuity by delivering some lessons at the college. The school has very good and successful arrangements to promote attendance, including a well-understood rewards system that motivates the students to attend.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Changes in leadership and management over the last four terms have been instrumental in refocusing an already caring school into one that additionally prioritises students' academic achievement. The middle leadership was reviewed and reorganised to make it more effective. This has led to ambitious plans across the school, and these are now shared with all staff. Middle leaders also feel they have a stronger voice in setting the school agenda and priorities through the well-attended biannual weekend conferences. Key areas of management have been identified and improved, such as staff's access to appropriate continuing professional development. Monitoring and evaluating data at all levels has been a key focus in driving the improvement in students' achievement. Greater emphasis by leaders has been placed on 'drop-in' observations of all teachers which run alongside formal observations. This has enabled the school to have an accurate picture of teaching and learning, ensuring that areas of underperformance are identified for development and support. The governors also carry out lesson observations to ensure they gain a picture of learning in classrooms. The school is now fully staffed by a qualified team of teachers and is well placed to deliver quality lessons to students.

The school has worked exceptionally hard to engage all parents and carers, including those that may be hard to reach. For example, the options day for Year 9 has been changed to a Saturday to ensure greater attendance. Regular newsletters and the website information keep parents and carers up to date with changes and news. The headteacher also holds drop-in surgeries which have proved popular and useful. The feedback from the surveys was very supportive of what the school is doing, with very few voicing any concerns.

The sports specialism has been the key catalyst in developing other partnerships, particularly with local primary and secondary schools. It is having an impact across a wide range of subjects in the school, with sports staff making an important contribution to whole staff training.

The school is ambitious for all its students. With the development of more thorough

systems for analysing data and tracking pupils' progress, the school can now identify any groups that are underperforming or not getting the same opportunities as their peers. For example, it came to light that girls had lower participation levels in the popular sports activities. The school has acted on this and is offering some female-only fitness clubs to ensure participation is encouraged. The school has a thorough understanding of its local community and has had a strong impact across the local area. It has worked hard to tackle some of the challenges which are prevalent in the local area. For example, rival groups, who have strong identities outside the school and cannot work together, feel able to do so inside the supportive school environment.

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	1
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
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

As can be seen from the table on the next page, parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and all that it offers. Some parents expressed particular concerns and these were investigated by inspectors. For example, a comment on the quality of food in the canteen resulted in this being investigated. Inspectors found the food quite acceptable. Nearly 10% of parents disagreed that the school deals effectively with poor behaviour. Inspectors agreed with the other 90% but did find that in a small number of lessons behaviour does fall below the generally high standard. The large majority of responses echoed the comment of a parent who wrote, 'The school has really helped my child and I am proud that she went to Hackney Free. Thank you'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hackney Free Parochial Church of England Secondary School Sports College 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 131 completed questionnaires by the end of the onsite inspection. In total, there are 745 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	40	71	54	7	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	43	33	81	63	5	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	34	71	58	10	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	37	70	57	3	3	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	42	34	77	62	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	22	84	70	9	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	28	74	60	12	10	2	2
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)	36	31	74	63	7	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	26	75	61	13	11	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	37	68	54	8	6	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	22	75	66	12	11	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	35	76	60	5	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	43	69	54	3	2	2	2

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.



25 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Hackney Free and Parochial Church of England Secondary School Specialist Sports College, London E9 6NR

Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do. Thank you also to those of you who completed questionnaires for us. I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school.

We have judged the overall effectiveness of your school to be satisfactory and improving. Many aspects of the work of the school are either good or outstanding. This is especially true of your personal well-being. The school is seen as a place of calm and safety where students from different backgrounds and areas can mix and learn together. You told us that you really enjoy school and appreciate the great care that staff show for you. That care is indeed outstanding, reflecting your school's Christian heritage.

Until recently, the school has been less successful in ensuring that the quality of your learning is always as good as it could be. You told us that things have improved recently and we found a lot of evidence to show that results are going up. To help you do even better we have asked the school to:

- improve your academic achievement through teaching that consistently displays high aspirations for all of you, keeps a check on how well you are doing and gives you advice on how to do better
- ensure that the best practice found in many areas of the school's work is implemented by all staff
- prepare you better for adult life by providing more opportunities for older students to learn about the world of money and business.

We wish you all the best. We know from your questionnaires and from talking to you that you are keen to do well and are proud of your school. We know that you will cooperate well with your headteacher and staff to continue to improve the school.

Yours faithfully

Adrian Lyons

Her Majesty's Inspector

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