

Cleeve Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101471
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	335725
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Tony Shield

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1066
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Prior
Headteacher	Jeremy Hodkinson
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 39 lessons and held meetings with governors, members of staff and students. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation. These included the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school development plan and records of pupils' progress. They analysed 155 parent questionnaire responses and also took into account of the views of students and staff expressed in questionnaires.

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

- the extent to which improvements made in GCSE and sixth form performance in examinations in 2009 have been sustained
- the impact of work to remove the barrier to learning of poor literacy skills
- the impact of measures to improve attendance, including work with persistent absentees and the most vulnerable students
- the extent to which teaching and the curriculum challenge and meet the needs of all students, including the most vulnerable and those at risk of underachievement
- the extent to which all middle managers are effectively involved in self-evaluation and school improvement.

Information about the school

Cleeve Park is a non-selective community school and draws its students from a wide area, and over 70 different primary schools. Bexley is a selective local authority, and many of its most able students choose to attend grammar or comprehensive faith schools. Although students of all abilities attend the school, there are fewer more able students than in schools nationally. Around one third of students at Cleeve Park have special educational needs and/or disabilities, higher than the national average. The school is also designated to provide facilities for physically disabled students.

The school is increasingly popular with parents and oversubscribed in Year 7. There are high rates of casual admissions in other years. Most pupils are of White British origin although there are increasing numbers of pupils from a range of other ethnic heritages. The school has specialist status in engineering.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Cleeve Park is a satisfactory school making significant strides forward, and with a number of good features. The headteacher, well supported by his senior team, has inspired the trust and confidence of staff and students alike with his clarity of vision and determination to bring out the best in everyone. As a result, the steady improvements made since his appointment have been consolidated and are now beginning to take off. Performance in GCSE and A-level examinations in 2009 is compelling evidence of the strong improvements now being made. Although overall results remained below the national average, they indicated that most students made satisfactory progress from their starting points and some exceeded their targets. Attendance, a key issue at the time of the last inspection, is now above average and a reflection of the improvements made to both the curriculum and the quality of teaching. As a result, student attitudes and their enjoyment of school are much more positive and making a strong contribution to their satisfactory achievement.

Above all else, expectations have been raised and the school has created a culture of ambition, in which both staff and students believe in their capacity to achieve. Parents are enthusiastic of the changes made, the improving climate for learning and in their support of the school. The vast majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are happy overall with their child's experience at the school. Typical of comments received by inspectors were: 'We have been very pleased with the school' and 'The school really cares about my child and wants him to succeed.' Indeed the school's concern for students' care and well-being is at the heart of all it does. As a result, students feel safe and very comfortable that there are teachers to trust and turn to whenever needed. Vulnerable pupils and those with special education needs and/or disabilities are well looked after.

A determined approach to lifting the quality of teaching has resulted in raising teachers' ambitions for their students. Assessment data are used to track the progress of students well and set challenging targets. While teaching is satisfactory overall, much is good and presents students with tasks well matched to their individual abilities. Lesson plans are adapted well, using information on how well each student is doing to provide challenge and interest. However this is not generally the case, and students do not always make good progress. Some students lack confidence in their ability to work and solve problems on their own, and to discuss how well they are doing and how they might improve. In the sixth form, where improvements are marked, teaching is of a more consistently good quality.

The school's status as an engineering school is helping to promote good links with local primary schools and the wider business community generally, and its impact on

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standards more generally is positive. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. While most students' behaviour is polite and thoughtful, a few are less considerate of others. The headteacher leads with integrity and insight. Self-evaluation is guided by a meticulous analysis of performance data and a well thought-out improvement plan offers a secure framework for further improvement. The school knows itself well and recognises that leveraging the quality of all teaching to that of the best is key to further improvement. Many heads of department are making significant contributions within their areas of responsibility, although this is not consistently so. However, there is, amongst the whole staff, a professional and reflective approach to improving teaching. The school's track record of recent improvement alongside their plans for further development indicates that it has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and ensure students make more consistently good progress by:
 - making sharper use of information on how well pupils are doing to set tasks which challenge individual pupils to achieve their full potential
 - developing the students' confidence and ability to work independently and solve problems without asking the teacher
 - ensuring students know how well they are doing and can discuss what they need to do to sustain good progress.
- Improve the leadership skills of all middle leaders to that of the best and make a more consistent contribution to self-evaluation and school improvement by:
 - ensuring they have the skills to analyse and use assessment data
 - monitoring more effectively the impact of teaching and provision on the learning and progress of students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enjoy their learning, and respond enthusiastically to the teaching. They are keen to do well and co-operate well with teachers and with each other in class and group discussions. They work hard and most take care and pride in their work.

Performance in GCSE examinations in 2009 was considerably higher than in 2008, which was itself higher than the previous year. Current attainment is still below average, but no longer significantly so. However, when results over the last three years are taken into account, attainment is judged low. Students are now making satisfactory progress, including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the school other than in Year 7. Underachievement is no longer a significant feature. Progress is better in those lessons where teaching is more effective such as in modern foreign languages. The quickening pace of improvement has been the result of decisive and successful action to improve the attendance and motivation of significant numbers of pupils. Also, better use of assessment data has enabled the school to plan

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interventions and strategies to support students at risk of not fulfilling their potential. Improvements in mathematics were not matched to the same extent in English, and poor literacy remains a barrier to more rapid progress in a number of subjects. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Students from Black and minority ethnic groups tend to make more consistently good progress than students from White British backgrounds. However the gap between the achievements of different groups is narrowing.

Students adopt safe ways of working in practical subjects. Bullying is said to be 'very rare' and parents and students say it is quickly and effectively dealt with. Students interviewed were unequivocal in their view that the school does much to promote healthy lifestyles, although, as one student admitted, 'sometimes we just prefer burger and chips'. Students are making a sound and increasingly confident contribution to the school itself and the wider community through taking on additional responsibilities such as membership of the year or school councils, peer mentoring and as 'subject champions'. The school's engineering specialism encourages productive links with local businesses and an awareness of the importance of enterprise skills is promoted through Young Enterprise activities and specific days devoted to enterprise activities and developing workplace skills. In this respect, students are well prepared for their futures. Attendance has improved markedly and is now above average, with a sharp reduction in the number of persistent absentees. However, given the overall standards of students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, overall, students' preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

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

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	
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	3

How effective is the provision?

The school has rightly devoted much attention to levering up the quality of teaching, and evidence from internal monitoring, confirmed by inspectors' observations, indicates that teaching is improving rapidly. Common features of the teaching seen by inspectors were confident subject knowledge and clear explanations to build understanding. Successful strategies to assess students' progress constantly in lessons and adapt the direction of the learning accordingly are in evidence in some areas of the curriculum, for example art and modern foreign languages, and developing in others. Opportunities to work in groups and share and discuss ideas together are often enthusiastically adopted by students. Peer- and self-assessment with clear criteria is used well to help students move on. However, many students lack the confidence to think for themselves and work on their own without the support of the teacher. A minority of lessons are more pedestrian and overly teacher directed. These have all the students working on the same task and can lack challenge for some students in the class. This can lead to a loss of focus and slow progress.

The curriculum is satisfactorily planned to match students' interests and aptitudes, but also reflect the school's engineering status, for example through a broad offer of technology options for GCSE. There are good opportunities for more-able students to pursue higher levels in related subjects through the additional support offered by extra curricular provision. Some able students are entered early for GCSE examinations, while on the other hand, pupils who find learning more difficult are provided with sound support and intervention programmes. The 'making good progress' programme has helped individual students achieve their targets more comfortably. Opportunities for students to develop their thinking skills and the resourcefulness to work independently of the teacher are underdeveloped in some subjects. There is a wide-ranging and popular programme of enrichment activities, particularly in sport, drama and music that give pupils opportunities for developing their personal and social skills. The forthcoming production of 'The Crucible' is eagerly awaited.

All students benefit from the school's good procedures for care, guidance and support. These are underpinned by a comprehensive range of policies and robust procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Effective links with external agencies support a number of vulnerable students, including those admitted in other than Year 7. The excellent arrangements for transition from primary schools were commented on by parents as giving their children a secure basis for starting school: 'My Year 7 child has settled in very well. The summer school was particularly enjoyable and helpful in making the transition.' The work of the pastoral team, and especially the form tutors and heads

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of year, is effective in ensuring all students are well known and have someone to turn to for advice and support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's clear and insightful vision is successfully conveyed to the rest of the school, and a range of strategies to drive up standards further is in place. Year on year improvements to levels of attendance, GCSE and A-level performance are testament to the success of this work. The academic performance of different groups of pupils is assiduously tracked and underpins the school's work to narrow the gap between the results of different groups in the school, promote equality and tackle discrimination. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and this helps ensure that all students feel included and have every opportunity to take part in school activities. As a consequence, all groups of students feel valued. The quality of leadership at head of department level varies. Although all are effective managers, not all are so confident in leading developments and monitoring teaching and learning within their subjects.

Governors are exceptionally well led by the Chair of the Governing Body, whose insights provide a good platform for governors to support and challenge the senior team. Other governors vary in their experience and expertise and overall, governors make a satisfactory contribution in holding the school to account. Prudent management of the school's resources is ensuring that the budget deficit is under control and on target to be paid back.

The school has been proactive in securing a good partnership with parents and with external agencies to support students' academic and personal development. Parental views are solicited and taken into account when drawing up plans for further development. The range of partnerships with other agencies is wide and particularly effective in supporting vulnerable students and those at risk. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust. At the time of the inspection, all safeguarding policies were in place. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. While the school has a good understanding of its context and an action plan is in place, the national and international dimensions of the school's approach are much less well served than the school's work within the local community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students are proud to be in the sixth form. They enjoy both the academic challenges and opportunities to develop good social and personal skills. Attainment on entry as measured by GCSE performance is below average. Results have been improving year on year and while this represents good progress for some students and in some subjects, because progress is variable in some subjects, it is satisfactory overall. Students are well cared for and receive good advice on how to apply for jobs and courses at college or university. Consequently, almost all move into employment or higher education.

Retention in both Year 12 and Year 13 is good. Much teaching, often in small groups, is good and students say they are well supported in their learning. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the school and to the wider community, for example in acting as guides for school open events, or as mentors for younger students.

Students benefit from a good choice of academic and applied courses. The range of intermediate and vocational courses available is limited, but they are readily available elsewhere in the locality. They participate in a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including sport, drama, subject-related trips and visits, and social activities which they help to organise themselves.

Leadership and management have been effective in driving the recent improvements in achievement and provision. However, these need more time before their impact on student outcomes is secure and to demonstrate the sustained improvement the school is striving for.

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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

Responses were received from 155 parents and carers. Those responding were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Very few indicated concerns or had negative comments about any aspect of the school's work. Parental comments especially commended the transition arrangements from primary school into Year 7, and the high levels of care and concern for students' well-being. There were very few negative comments, although a few commented on the amount of homework received, but these were not borne out by inspection evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cleeve Park 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 155 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 989 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	34	97	63	5	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	37	93	60	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	26	103	66	8	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	26	100	65	9	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	24	103	66	9	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	19	104	67	17	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	16	107	69	15	10	2	1
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)	40	26	92	59	5	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	25	99	64	8	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	34	85	55	9	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	16	101	65	9	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	47	30	101	65	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	35	93	60	3	2	1	1

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.



11 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Cleeve Park School, DA14 4JN

Thank you very much for being so welcoming when we recently visited your school. It is clear that you enjoy being pupils at the school and take part in everything the school offers with energy and enthusiasm. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education and it is improving rapidly. These are the main elements in our report:

- GCSE and A-level results in 2009 were much improved on previous years' results and are evidence of your increasing wish to do your best in examinations. These positive attitudes are a strong contributory factor in your improving progress.
- Overall attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now just above the national average. Well done!
- While teaching is judged satisfactory overall, much is good. Sometimes work set does not meet your personal needs and challenge you to work hard enough. As a result, your progress is always at least satisfactory, but not always good.
- Adults take considerable care to ensure that you are well looked after and supported through school.
- Many of you develop personal and social skills, which help prepare you for your future beyond school.
- The curriculum is increasingly designed to meet your personal needs.
- The headteacher has been very successful in helping to make the school better, and he is well supported by the senior team and other teachers.
- We have asked the teachers to consider how they use information about how well you are progressing to set you work which challenges you even more in lessons to reach even higher standards. We think the school can develop your ability to work on your own more, and ensure that you know how to improve your work. We have also asked the subject leaders to consider how they check that their teaching really makes a difference to the progress you make.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit. Good luck with your work in the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield

Lead inspector

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