



Plumstead Manor School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 100183
LEA Greenwich

Inspection number 274834
Inspection dates 28-29 April, 2005
Reporting inspector Dr Calvin Pike

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	Old Mill Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	11-19		SE18 1QF
Gender of pupils	Girls (Mixed 6 th form)	Telephone number	020 8855 5011
Number on roll	1719	Fax number	020 8317 9743
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr F Lerner
Date of previous inspection	4-8 October, 1999	Headteacher	Ms J Harding

Age group	Published	Reference no.
11-19	May 2005	274834

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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Plumstead Manor School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Plumstead Manor is popular, large multi-ethnic school in Greenwich, including 547 in the Negus sixth form centre. Students are from diverse, sometimes deprived, backgrounds. About a half of the student population is white and many ethnic minority groups are represented. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is very high; those known to be eligible for free school meals is well above averages; and, students with statements of special educational needs is above average. Students start school at the age of eleven with skills and knowledge that are below the levels expected nationally of this age group. The school gained Performing Arts college status in 2000 and Humanities college status in 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a highly effective school with many outstanding features influenced particularly by its Performing Arts specialist status. Students feel safe in its secure atmosphere of mutual respect and support. They enjoy their work and make very good progress in their personal development due to a rich range of opportunities and outstanding quality of care. Examination results are mainly below national averages, but students achieve outstandingly well because teaching is good and students receive outstanding support and guidance. The leadership and management of the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are outstanding; in the rest of the school, they are good overall. The head has a clear and exciting vision to ensure the development of all students and staff as members of this school community. She inspires, supports and organises others to realise that vision in practice. Senior managers show a strong commitment to enhance many aspects of the school, all focused on improving learning, standards and the personal development and well-being of students. Finances are managed well. The school offers very good value for money.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen. Students achieve much more over time because teaching has improved. What there is to study is now more interesting and courses for older students give them a wider choice that better matches their needs and abilities.

The staff share a very good understanding of the school's strengths and where it can do better through rigorous analysis of performance which is used to plan for further improvement. The inspection findings match the school's self-evaluation closely except in some cases where the school has been modest about its achievements. The school is exceptionally well placed to move forward and has a very strong capacity to improve.

Grade: 1

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

The school and inspectors agree the sixth form is very effective. Students achieve well in most aspects of their work because teaching is good. Results are below averages nationally, but show continuing improvement. Students make very good progress in their personal development and show an exceptionally mature outlook. They speak highly of their relationships with staff and of the excellent support they receive. An extensive range of academic and vocational opportunities is available, but there is room to improve provision for information communication technology (ICT). The school is in a strong position

to improve, because the quality of leadership and management and its use of self-evaluation are very good.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

To build on its successes, the school should:

- make teaching more responsive to students' needs by using assessment in lessons to plan even more challenging learning
- extend opportunities for students to develop and use ICT skills across the curriculum
- refine and ensure more rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of learning by some middle managers

Achievement and standards

Students' achievements are outstanding in the main school and good in the sixth form. They meet the school's challenging targets to reach the standards expected nationally by the end of Year 9. From a starting point that is below average, most students achieve highly in Years 7 to 9. A very small number of students from ethnic minority backgrounds progress less rapidly. Results of recent national tests underline the steady improvement in attainment results over recent years. Standards in English are in line with those seen nationally and much better than those in similar schools. In mathematics standards are lower than those seen nationally, but much better than in similar schools. In science the students' standards are much lower than the national picture, but better than in similar schools.

The number of pupils gaining the higher grades in GCSE examinations is lower than the national figure, but higher than in schools in similar contexts. The number of students gaining at least one pass is well above average. Progress overall is very good; in mathematics and community languages results met national averages. The standard of work seen in the school confirms the improving trend in examination results. There are considerable strengths in performing arts where standards are high but, throughout the school and in the sixth form, levels of achievement in the use of information and communication technology are below those seen in other subjects.

Standards in the sixth form are below average, but, in view of students' wide range of attainment at the start of their courses, are good in all subjects.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

Students enjoy their education, feel safe in their school and are very proud of it. They show a highly developed sense of right and wrong, an ability to reflect thoughtfully on their experiences and a mature sensitivity to the needs of others. This is demonstrated in their involvement in decisions about the school, work with local Samaritans, Pulse and charity groups and in the school's emphasis on concerns through Refugee Week and Black History celebrations.

Students' excellent attitudes to learning and their sensitive behaviour to each other, staff and visitors have a significant impact on achievement. They develop confidence and self-esteem that enables them to become independent learners. They assume key responsibilities such as form captains, games captains and student council members with pride. Their increased involvement in school life and contribution to its successes has improved attendance since the last inspection.

Sixth form students understand the importance of following healthy lifestyles, encouraged by Plumstead's 'Healthy School' task force and accreditation in 2005. They participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities, including sports leadership awards, and in performing arts as musicians, dancers and actors. These enhance their sense of responsibility in their own and local primary schools. Students also develop a growing understanding of the contribution they can make to the wider community both as students and adults when for example; they took an active part in mock political elections led by passionate and persuasive sixth formers.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The inspection confirms the school's judgement that teaching and learning are good. Improved teaching has helped raise standards since the last inspection. Most lessons have clear objectives and a common structure, although these sometimes lack the detail needed to meet the full range of students' needs. Students learn well and make good progress. In a Year 12 business studies lesson, for example, they developed very good understanding of concepts of leadership and applied this effectively in co-operative group work that encouraged them to reflect on their own and other styles in different contexts.

Teachers manage lessons effectively with good pace. In a Year 12 chemistry session, for example, learning was outstanding because students learned

independently, thinking for themselves in investigating chemical reactions and applying their understanding of difficult concepts with increasing confidence. However, at times the rate of learning does not challenge higher attaining pupils enough in class or homework.

Students' progress is assessed regularly and good feedback is given to them so they know how to improve. Where learning is best, there is a good balance of activities that enable teachers to assess in each lesson so that they can plan future lessons to meet students' needs even better. Teaching assistants and learning mentors support students with special educational needs effectively by helping teachers to ensure these students make good progress.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The school provides a good, varied and stimulating curriculum that meets the needs of individual students, including those with special educational needs. All students in Years 7 to 11 follow a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. In Years 10 and 11 the range of options has been increased. Developments, including work placements in local organisations and active citizenship and enterprise programmes, are effective in meeting students' needs and interests and provide access to a good range of qualifications. Curriculum innovations, especially those linked with theatre, dance and music have widened course and extra curricular activities significantly. Students are pleased their views influenced these changes.

The use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped. The school has recently improved resources and plans to develop this area of the curriculum.

Students are generally enthusiastic about the new healthy eating lunch menus. Students learn about healthy living and personal safety and have many opportunities to contribute to the community through their participation in a range of activities from local community action or volunteer groups to work to support national charities.

The curriculum in the sixth form provides a very good range of courses that prepares students very effectively for the future.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

The school's outstanding quality of care, guidance and support has a significant impact on students' well being, personal development and their excellent progress.

Recently awarded the Inclusion Chartermark, staff and outside agencies work closely together to ensure the school's carefully defined policies and rigorous procedures for important areas such as child protection, health and safety and first aid are implemented effectively. Excellent staff training ensures that they know what is required, who is responsible and they follow systems closely.

Very effective induction procedures help Year 7 and other new students to settle in quickly. Arrangements for dealing with incidents of bullying are clear, contributing strongly to students' sense of security and the school's calm atmosphere. Tutors help students set and discuss personal targets regularly so that tutors know how well individuals are doing and students receive effective guidance to support their progress. Well-coordinated expertise including that of the Learning Support Department, School House, and the Personal Development Department ensures that students with special needs are supported well. Those at an early stage of learning English are helped to make very good progress, utilising their home languages successfully to enhance their development of English language. The carefully constructed programme for careers education is very good and provides students with guidance on a wide range of academic and vocational courses.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school, including the work of governors, are outstanding. This is evident in the school's improving standards, the quality of its teaching and in provision that enables students to develop exceptionally well in a safe, individually encouraging and mutually respectful context.

The headteacher has a clear vision to ensure all students reach their personal and academic potential. She communicates this passionately and has developed robust systems to help achieve it through the continuing development of committed staff, aided by parents wherever possible.

Management by the leadership team, including of the sixth form, is very good and middle management is good overall. Departmental plans match closely the long-term improvement plans for the whole school. A regular cycle of evaluation includes observation of teaching and rigorous analysis of data. This is complemented by reflective feedback from staff and student groups and parental surveys. Consequently, the school has a very accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses, staff moral is high and students' are proud of their school – all of which is acknowledged in its quality assurance awards including Investors in People.

Governors are very supportive and help the headteacher and managers reflect on decisions and question the school's successes regularly. Their links with individual departments, including visits and discussions with key staff, give governors first-hand experience of provision and any issues that may block progress, strengthening the role of governors in contributing to the overall leadership of the school.

The school works very closely and effectively with external agencies including Kinara Family Support Centre, Youth Offending team, Anti-social Behaviour Team and Connexions. Together these provide substantial support to students, especially those with learning difficulties and looked after children. This is strengthened by the school's designated special provision that supports students with moderate learning difficulties and the robust structures that ensure all students are cared for sensitively and effectively.

Resources are managed efficiently to ensure standards are raised across the school. The school is innovative in attracting experienced and new staff, offering an excellent staff development programme for teachers and learning mentors that enhances students' learning. Very good steps have been taken to reform structures and roles so that teachers can concentrate fully on helping students to achieve high standards.

As a result of the many leadership and management strengths, the school is in a very strong position to improve.

Grade: 1

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Annex A

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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	-	-
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Y	Y
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Y	Y

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

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	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1
How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?	1	1

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Y	Y

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	Yes/No/NA
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Y
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Y
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Y
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Y
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	Yes/No/NA
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Y
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Y
How well learners enjoy and achieve	Yes/No/NA
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Y
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Y
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Yes/No/NA
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Y
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Y
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Y
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Yes/No/NA
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Y
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Y
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	Y

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Plumstead Manor School
Old Mill Road
London SE18 1QF

6th May, 2005

Dear students

Following our visit to your school, we would like to thank you for your contributions to the inspection and tell you our findings. I am sure you will not be surprised to know we decided yours is an outstanding school with only a few weaknesses that the staff are well placed to improve.

The main strengths are:

- You make good progress and attain high standards because there is good teaching that helps you become good learners
- Your headteacher and other senior staff work very effectively to make sure the school continues to improve for all of you
- Your attendance is improving, you arrive on time and behave very well
- You enjoy getting involved in the very wide range of activities available and taking responsibilities that prepare you well for your careers in the future
- You like your school, feel safe in it and confident that you could do well there because the school's support for you is extremely effective and the work your teachers do with your parents and people outside the school helps to make your school as caring as it is
- The quality and variety of courses you study and the environment of the school have improved since the last inspection

We have asked the school to make the following improvements:

- Teachers need to check on how well you are doing in all lessons so that they are able to provide even better challenges in future lessons
- You need to have many more opportunities to use your ICT skills in all subjects so that you can develop and apply them in different aspects of your work
- Your heads of department and others who look at your work and that of teachers need to focus even more on how well what you do helps you to make progress and do as well as you can.

Yours sincerely

Calvin Pike
Lead inspector