

Garratt Park School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 101103 |
| Local Authority | Wandsworth |
| Inspection number | 354941 |
| Inspection dates | 22–23 June 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | James Bowden |

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

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| 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 | 174 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 37 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr John Corbally |
| Headteacher | Mrs Irene Parks |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 September 2007 |
| School address | Waldron Road London SW18 3TB |
| Telephone number | 02089465769 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons, seeing 15 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and others with posts of responsibility. The Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors also met the lead inspector. The inspectors also met with three small groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at samples of students' work, the school's planning and other assessment records. The lead inspector analysed 42 questionnaires from parents and carers, 61 from students and 65 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Does the school have a consistent trend of improvement in students' achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 and the end of the sixth form?
- Is teaching sufficiently challenging for students, enabling all groups to make the best progress possible?
- What has been the impact of the school's specialist status for mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) on standards?
- How effective is leadership at all levels in moving the school forward?

Information about the school

Garratt Park School provides for students with moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and or other special educational needs and/or disabilities, including speech, language and communication needs and a few with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs. Currently almost a half of students are of White British background and almost a quarter are from Black African or Black Caribbean backgrounds. The remainder are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Boys outnumber girls by just over two to one. Four students are looked after by the local authority and three are refugees and asylum seekers. Thirty-six students speak English as an additional language. Most students are from Wandsworth with a few from adjoining boroughs. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.

The school has a designated resource area for ASD students. It also has an advisory service, which provides outreach work to mainstream primary and secondary schools in the borough. It was designated as a specialist mathematics and computing school in September 2008. The school has achieved the Investors in People silver award, Enhanced Healthy Schools status and the Inclusion Quality Mark among many other awards.

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

The school provides a good quality education for its students. It is effective in enabling them to develop self-confidence, an ability to communicate and to acquire the skills necessary in life, which is one of its key aims. The school has significant strengths that underpin students' well-being and learning. The outstanding partnerships and multi-agency work across the school leads to high quality care, guidance and support for students. In turn, this enables them to make excellent progress in aspects of their personal development and prepares them well for the next stage of their lives after sixth form. Students' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that most have positive views about the education they receive. Staff help each student, including the most vulnerable and those identified as having complex needs, in very specific ways and ensure that all are looked after in a safe, healthy and caring environment. Fellow professionals and head teachers in local mainstream schools value the support and advice from the outreach service highly. In addition, the school is highly effective in forging close links with parents and carers. Consequently, the very large majority are highly appreciative of all aspects of the school's work. One summed up the typical view noting, 'As a parent, I am happy with my child's progress, the school and the teachers try to meet my child's needs and my child enjoys coming to school.'

Although there are some variations within and across subjects, students' academic progress across the school is good and school data show this is now improving steadily over time in relation to their starting points. There are no significant differences between different groups of students or boys and girls. Progress is also good in lessons because teachers know their students well and effective planning ensures the needs of students are catered for well. Teaching is good and there is some outstanding, as well as satisfactory, practice. The good curriculum, reflecting that taught in mainstream schools, as well as focusing on cross-curricular delivery of mathematics and ICT, underpins the school's focus on preparing students for the next stage of their education. However, the school recognises that there are still issues over matching the curriculum more closely to the needs of individual students in order to improve their progress even further.

The headteacher, senior leaders and managers have a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school. There is a clear focus on continuing improvement, particularly in students' personal development, as well as in teaching and learning. The staff support the school's ethos and have the best interests of students at heart. Curriculum content and enrichment activities support the school's excellent promotion of community cohesion within the school itself, the local community and beyond at an international level. School self-evaluation is generally accurate, although in some respects over generous, and supports strategic planning in order to move the school forward. Areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been remedied. In light of these comments, the school's current capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise further the quality of learning and students' academic progress by extending existing good, personalised learning so that it becomes exemplary practice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In all lessons, students, regardless of their needs or backgrounds and including those who speak English as an additional language, consolidate and build on previous learning well. This, along with the individual targets set by teachers, supports the good progress they make overall. In a Key Stage 3 science lesson, students were totally absorbed in the task of finding mini-beasts in the garden for their investigation, as well as understanding the importance of returning them to their habitats. In a Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh Award lesson, focusing on aspirations for the future, students made excellent progress in deepening their knowledge and understanding of key vocabulary such as 'first impressions', and 'stereotype'. Progress and learning were less secure and slower in a mixed-age group of senior students in a mathematics lesson where they were learning about the importance of income being greater than outgoings when earning a wage.

Students, with few exceptions, are delighted with all aspects of the care and support they receive from staff. They say that the school is a safe place to learn and, although a small minority are critical of behaviour in the school in their questionnaire responses, in meetings with inspectors students told how their behaviour has improved since they started at the school. They are confident that, should they raise any issues concerning safety, these will be dealt with sensitively. Students' personal development is underpinned by strong staff and student relationships. Instances of unacceptable behaviour are declining and during the inspection learning was not affected because of any untoward behaviour. The award of Enhanced Healthy Schools status (2011) has recognised the extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles. Students have a say in the running of the school through their elected representatives on the school council and have delegated responsibilities, such as being prefects, as well as supporting charitable causes. Procedures for raising attendance rates, including support from outside professionals when appropriate, have effectively improved the overall average rate of attendance and reduced unauthorised absence. This, along with students' good progress in acquiring key skills, equips them well for the next stage of their education.

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

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 | |
| 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 | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: | 3 |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and other adults work effectively together and know the needs of students well. Planning is supported by effective and ongoing assessment of their capabilities. ICT is used effectively to support teaching and enliven learning. Sensitive and careful interventions help students stay on task so that their needs are met. This was particularly evident in a Key Stage 3 English lesson in the designated resource area for ASD students where well-structured and effective use of established communication packages enabled students to make good progress towards their individual specific learning objectives and to make accurate use of time-referenced vocabulary such as 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'. However, learning intentions are not always made clear at the start of lessons, which means students are not always fully aware of what is expected of them. This results in the pace of learning being steady rather than brisk and purposeful. At the end of lessons, not all teachers consolidate students' learning by summarising key points and assessing students' understanding, as well as asking students themselves to assess what they have learned. Praise is never over effusive and success is rewarded appropriately, in line with the school's policy.

As well as reflecting the National Curriculum, the school has added further breadth to the curriculum by incorporating a range of other accredited courses. The school was trialling a

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transition themed curriculum for years 11, 12 and 13, lessons being taught in mixed-age groups. As a result, of the school's specialist status, both curricular and cross-curricular provision for mathematics and ICT has improved and is contributing to students' improving progress in these areas. The personal, social and health education curriculum contributes well to students' personal development and attributes and this, along with an extensive range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, contributes particularly well to their overall excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Language development is also provided for effectively within the curriculum through the work of the school's personalised additional language and literacy support team.

Students' health and well-being are at the forefront of the school's excellent ethos of care. Staff work hard to ensure this and have the added and valuable support of a wide range of other specialist professionals. Parents and carers are also supported in many and effective ways. A carefully managed and executed programme of reviews is effective in supporting students on entry to the school, throughout their time there and when they leave.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| 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?

The drive and ambition of the headteacher, her senior leadership team and management teams have resulted in a sharp focus on monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning as well as all other areas. As recognised by the Investors in People silver award. This sharp focus on monitoring has sustained strengths identified at the previous inspection as well as identifying areas for further improvement. However, although self-evaluation has accurately identified significant strengths, in other respects this has been too positive and does not always reflect what was seen during the inspection. The governing body and the school work closely together to ensure safeguarding procedures and practices have a high priority, are effective, up to date and reflect current good practice. The school is effective in ensuring all learners have equality of opportunity. It tackles any discrimination and achieves an effective ethos of inclusion with no underachievement of any individual or group. This has been recognised by the Inclusion Quality Mark award (2011). The school's excellent promotion of community cohesion is reflected in students' growing knowledge and understanding of this from a local, wider community and international community perspective. Year 8 students have, for example, established links via e-mail and letters with a primary school in a fishing village in Thailand. Given the outcomes the school achieves, it is providing good value for money.

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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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Sixth form

During the inspection, the usual sixth form timetable was suspended because of the transition programme in place for the week. However, lessons were observed in which sixth form students predominated. School assessment data show students are making good progress in English, mathematics and ICT in relation to their achievements at the end of Year 11. However, there are inconsistencies in the progress made over time both within and across these subjects. Students also achieve well in other accredited academic and vocational courses. Some of which enables some students to make a significant contribution to the wider community beyond the school. Students have been actively involved in the school's recruitment procedures, helping interview prospective candidates. There are no significant discrepancies in the progress made by different groups of students. At the end of sixth form, all students continue on to further education, employment or training.

Good teaching enables students to make good progress in lessons. In a lesson looking at the importance of preparing for interviews, students identified correctly many instances when they would need to be formally interviewed. In addition, as a result, of effective and lively use of ICT, students then developed their knowledge and understanding of how to prepare for such occasions, as well as how not to. The curriculum is adapted for individual students and supports well their personal progress and growing independence.

Partnerships, including work experience placements, are also effective in this respect. The school is currently exploring links for individual students with mainstream secondary schools. Levels of care, support and guidance are outstanding as in the main school. Leadership and management are good, with a focus on further improvement and ensuring the health, safety and well-being of students has a high priority. Improvement planning is linked to that of the whole-school cycle of monitoring and evaluation.

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

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was below the national average for special schools. Almost all parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at the school. All say that the school keeps their child safe and helps their child have a healthy lifestyle. A very small minority feel the school does not inform them about their child's progress and that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors investigated such concerns and their findings can be found earlier in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Garratt 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 174 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 23 | 55 | 16 | 38 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 27 | 64 | 14 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 25 | 60 | 10 | 24 | 5 | 12 | 2 | 5 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 18 | 43 | 15 | 36 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 10 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 26 | 62 | 9 | 21 | 4 | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 22 | 52 | 14 | 33 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 22 | 52 | 17 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 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) | 19 | 45 | 16 | 38 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 23 | 55 | 16 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 22 | 52 | 14 | 33 | 6 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 19 | 45 | 16 | 38 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 10 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 25 | 60 | 13 | 31 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 25 | 60 | 9 | 21 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 7 |

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 all 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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 46 | 48 | 6 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 47 | 40 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 12 | 39 | 38 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 28 | 49 | 19 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 45 | 31 | 10 |
| All schools | 10 | 46 | 37 | 7 |

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



29 June 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Garratt Park School, London SW18 3TB

Not so long ago, three of us came to your school to see how well you are getting on. We also wanted to know whether we could suggest anything to make things even better for you. We really enjoyed meeting you in lessons and around the school, as well as chatting with three small groups of you. Your responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and what you told us in these groups showed that most of you have positive views about the education you receive. We can see why and we agree with you. We think your school gives you a good education.

Here are some of the good things we found:

- Since the previous inspection, the school has kept up what was identified as best practice, as well as making further improvements for you.
- The school works really well with lots of other people, including your parents and carers, to help you make good progress in your academic work.
- You make outstanding progress in aspects of your personal development, which prepares you very well for when you leave Garratt Park.
- All the staff care for you well and make sure you are safe.
- In lessons, teachers and other adults give you lots of help and support.
- There are lots of interesting and enjoyable things for you to do.
- The headteacher and her senior staff have plans to make things even better for you.

In order to make further improvements, we have asked the headteacher to make sure the curriculum helps you even more.

Some of you can help too by improving your attendance even further. Many thanks for letting us see what you were learning in school during our visit.

Yours sincerely

James Bowden

Lead inspector

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