

Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101466
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	307695
Inspection dates	28-29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Roger Whittaker

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

Type of School	Grammar (selective)
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1315
Sixth form	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Waters
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Walker
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2004
School address	Hurst Road Sidcup DA15 9AG
Telephone number	020 8302 6511
Fax number	020 8309 6596

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a very large grammar school with a large sixth form. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is average but the proportion of students where English is not their first language is lower compared with most schools. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is well below average. The school achieved specialist sports status in 2005. The new headteacher was appointed at the end of January 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The sixth form is outstanding. One parent said of the school, 'I am extremely pleased with the education both my children are receiving at Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School.' Students reach exceptionally high academic standards and develop into mature, well-rounded young people who are exceptionally prepared for the next stage of their education and life. Central to this is the strong sense of community and the excellent relationships among staff and students that contribute to their achievement and enjoyment. Students involve themselves enthusiastically in the life of the school and this results in them taking a pride in their school and being keen to do well.

Standards are significantly above average in all year groups. Throughout their time at the school students make good progress and the results in public examinations at the end of Year 11 are exceptionally high. Consistently good teaching and the students' very positive attitudes are significant factors that contribute to good achievement. Lessons contain interesting and challenging activities to which students respond well. However, students' independent learning skills are less developed, which restricts and sometimes slows their progress in lessons. This is resulting in some students not achieving the highest grades of A* and A in their GCSE examination results. Monitoring of lessons takes place regularly but does not focus sharply enough on students' learning to enable students to achieve the highest grades or lead to systematic improvement in teaching.

The curriculum is outstanding. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection so that all statutory requirements are now being met. The range of courses available means that students are motivated to succeed. The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive and inspiring range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

The school has used its sports college status successfully to drive up levels of attainment where the majority of targets from the specialist bid have been met. Curriculum provision has been broadened, and there has been substantial support for community partners through the sports and modern foreign languages leadership courses.

Students feel exceptionally well cared for and treated as individuals. Teachers know them well and there is a wide range of support systems in place. Students particularly appreciate their opinions being sought through forums such as the school council.

The headteacher and school leaders have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have made many improvements since the last inspection. It has good capacity to make further improvement. Despite these improvements there is scope to develop and sharpen the monitoring of lessons to ensure that all students reach their targets and to raise standards further. Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School enjoys an excellent reputation in the local community and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion. The governing body knows the school well and provides the headteacher and staff with good support while offering suitable challenge.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent experience for students in the sixth form. Students' exemplary attitude to work helps them to make outstanding progress. The extremely high quality of care, guidance and support in addition to outstanding teaching enable them to reach exceptionally high standards.

Students demonstrate outstanding personal development, for example, most support and mentor younger students and take on leadership roles by leading committees that enrich the school community. They act as excellent ambassadors for the school and are very good role models for the younger students. The sixth form offers a wide choice of courses that meets the needs of its students and prepares them for life very well. The students take an active part in the extra-curricular programme as they are fully involved in a range of activities that include sport, music and drama.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching has a greater impact so that a larger percentage of students achieve the higher grades.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation strategies so that leadership focuses more clearly on the learning of students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students join the school with levels of attainment, skills and abilities that are above those for their age. By the end of Year 11 they make good progress in reaching exceptionally high standards. In 2008 100 per cent of students achieved five or more A* to C grades and 99 per cent achieved five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics in their GCSE examinations. These results are exceptionally high; however, students are not achieving as well at the higher grades of A* to A. The school is aware of this and is introducing strategies to address the situation, including further developing the quality of teaching and learning.

Focused support for a very small number of students with statements of special educational needs and moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that these students achieve exceptionally well towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students are very proud of their school, as seen in their smart appearance and courteous and friendly behaviour to visitors. They value education and want to succeed. Many students remark on the strong sense of community in the school and the supportive relationships between students. A wide range of responsibilities enables students to become self-motivated young people. For example, the sports specialisation has developed an excellent leadership scheme which enabled students to run a tag rugby tournament for local primary children. The school council and involvement in staff and student working groups enables students to have a real impact on the life of the school.

Through excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development students become mature and aware of the needs of others. Incidents of bullying or other forms of harassment are rare, and are dealt with effectively. Behaviour is good. Around the school and in most lessons behaviour is very good, but in some lessons a minority lose concentration when teaching is not sufficiently challenging. Students enjoy school, and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. Students feel safe, happy and secure. Extensive facilities enable all students to participate in many sports, including sailing and golf, and they learn the importance of healthy living. Excellent core skills and development of team and leadership roles means they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The very good relationships between teachers and students enhance students' confidence and motivation. They find teachers helpful and they can approach them for extra assistance outside lessons. Students work hard and do their homework conscientiously.

In the most effective lessons learning is lively and inspiring. For example, in one lesson students worked in small groups using role play to assess their understanding of work already covered. Teachers use good subject knowledge, set high expectations for all learners, and involve students in self-assessment against clearly identified learning outcomes. However, in some lessons students' needs are not consistently met and they are not set challenging work that enables them to make progress towards the highest level. Often this is because students do not have sufficient time or opportunity to develop and use independent learning and thinking skills. As a result students achieve exceptionally well when judged against outcomes of GCSE passes at A* to C grades, but some are not being challenged enough in order to achieve the higher A* to A grades. There are very good systems in lessons to ensure that students with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. It is continually reviewed and developed to match students' interests. The range of courses available ensures that all students are motivated to succeed. Improvements since the last inspection have meant that all statutory requirements are met. A recent innovation has been the introduction of special curriculum days. These events provide valuable opportunities for students to work with others of different ages on cross-curricular links and cultural activities, as well as for developing skills in team-working.

The school's specialism in sports is making a particularly strong contribution in an increasing number of areas, including all students taking the short course GCSE in physical education, and the participation of all students in the sports leadership qualification. The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive and inspiring range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including orchestra, rock band, film club and Young Enterprise. Students enthuse about the opportunities to take part in educational trips and sports tours to Europe and beyond, and the encouragement to participate in teaching at local primary schools. These widen their interests and experiences and contribute strongly to their personal and academic development. Provision for personal, social and health education, work experience and citizenship is strong and makes a good contribution to students' enjoyment of school life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding and caring environment in which students can flourish both as individuals and as part of the community. Excellent pastoral care and good links with parents and outside agencies support students with particular difficulties. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are securely in place, and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. There are very good systems in place to ensure the smooth transfer of students from their primary schools and to ensure that those entering the sixth form quickly settle in. Careers advice is effective and students make informed choices about their future education and employment. Procedures for promoting good attendance are thorough and extremely effective. Excellent systems are used to assess and monitor students' progress and they are involved in setting their own targets. All students understand how well they are working and how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good with some outstanding features. There are strengths in the way the school evaluates its own performance. It knows itself exceptionally well and therefore the very effective new headteacher, supported by an enthusiastic senior leadership team, is correctly focusing his efforts on raising standards even higher. The leadership team use every opportunity to instil high expectations for success among staff and students. However, the effect of this work has not yet had time to address the issue of students not reaching the highest levels.

Good systems are in place to monitor the work of the school, although these are not always focused on the impact of the work on students' learning. The school's improvement plan does not set out measurable success criteria that will

allow senior leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of any changes over time. The staff know students well and have a good understanding of their personal development.

This is an inclusive school and a variety of well-established systems exist to support all students. The school uses strong links with the community to develop good community cohesion. Specialist sports status is well led and is having a positive impact on the school. Professional development activities are increasingly effective in developing the capacity of all staff. In particular, this is beginning to improve the quality of work of middle leaders, who now play a pivotal role in monitoring and supporting students' progress.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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?	2	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	1
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	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

13 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School, Sidcup, DA15 9AG

Following our visit to Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School, we would like to share our findings with you. We thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for the helpful way you talked to us about your school and your work. We can now report to you that Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School is providing you with a good standard of education. In the sixth form the standard of education is outstanding. We are pleased that you enjoy school and the many opportunities it provides, particularly the after school activities. Standards in examinations are exceptionally above national average and you make good progress.

The school is a very happy and friendly community where everyone is valued equally. Your teachers are very committed to helping you and they look after you really well. We are pleased that you have very good awareness of how to be safe around the school. Your headteacher is working very hard, with the rest of the staff, to give even more opportunities to learn as well as you can.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to make sure that everything they do is focused on your learning, and that you are given more opportunities to develop and use independent learning skills in lessons so that you are able to achieve the highest grades in GCSE examinations.

Yours faithfully

Roger Whittaker
Lead Inspector

