

Dunraven School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 100639 |
| Local Authority | Lambeth |
| Inspection number | 323321 |
| Inspection dates | 12-13 May 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Brian Evans |

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

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| Type of School | Comprehensive |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 11-18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 1166 |
| Sixth form | 184 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Joel McInnes |
| Principal | Mr David Boyle |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 November 2005 |
| School address | 94-98 Leigham Court Road London SW16 2QB |
| Telephone number | 020 8677 2431 |
| Fax number | 020 8664 7242 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is above average size and occupies two sites, separated by a busy road. Students have to travel between sites on a regular basis. Students come from a wide and varied catchment area. The proportions of students eligible for free school meals and those who have statements of special educational needs are above average. The proportion of students having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly those who have moderate learning difficulties or those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, is broadly average. Sixty-five per cent of students are of Black Caribbean or African backgrounds. Nearly a third speak English as an additional language. The school has specialisms in technology (since 2000) and mathematics and computing (since 2005). Dunraven's sixth form is also part of a collaboration with two local girls' schools (South London Sixth). Among many other accreditations and awards it has twice been redesignated as an Investors in Peoples institution - most recently in 2008. The school has the Advanced Healthy School status. There is on site an independently managed pre-school provision, The Sophie Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dunraven is a good school. It has a significant number of outstanding features. Since the last inspection, it has made good progress under the outstanding leadership and vision of the principal who has the very strong support of all levels of management and of the governing body. The work of the school is carefully monitored. Self-evaluation is open, honest, self-critical and accurate. School leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they have produced well-targeted plans for ongoing improvement. The school's specialisms have had a positive impact on an excellent curriculum, broadening the range of courses on offer, increasing information and communication technology provision and developing its use across the school. The school sets realistic and challenging targets that arise from a detailed analysis of students' attainment and progress. For all the above reasons the school has an excellent capacity to improve.

Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly average. They make good progress and many, regardless of attainment or background, reach their personal challenging targets. Overall attainment is above average. The needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities are met well by teachers and by well-trained learning support assistants. They make very good progress. The GCSE standards attained over the past three years have placed the school in the top one third nationally on the basis of achievement.

These high levels of performance are initially underpinned by the good teaching and learning, which includes a high number of outstanding lessons. In the best practice, teachers generate excellent group work and private study that motivates students to think and learn for themselves. This gives them confidence and enables them to review and guide their thinking to indicate the next steps in their learning. Senior leaders recognise that there is more work to do to enable all students to develop these independent learning skills, but clearly a good start has been made. Learning has a very high status in the school and the vast majority of students are sympathetic to others who work hard or strive to improve their performance in any sphere of the school curriculum. Most parents are very supportive - one writes, 'Dunraven has an excellent balance between education, pastoral support and extra-curricular activities.'

The atmosphere of harmony and tolerance throughout the school reflects the school's active approach to developing a good cohesive community. For example, it is reflected in the dramatic decrease in exclusions over the past three years. Personal development and well-being in the school is good overall. Aspects such as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, students' health and safety, and their contributions to the community are outstanding. A Year 11 student stated, 'There is a great sense of community in our school; we get on with everyone, whatever their backgrounds.' Most students behave and engage well in lessons. They are well supported by effective pastoral teams who work closely with a host of outside agencies to provide excellent quality of care, support and guidance. Attendance is good and improving. Students have a good knowledge of how to be healthy and how to stay safe.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The vast majority of students in an outstanding sixth form finish their courses and a high proportion of them move on to higher education. Operating as part of an established and growing collaboration with two local schools, a fifth of its students have completed their compulsory education elsewhere before joining the school. Most students achieve well, making good progress. Standards overall are average. Students' personal development is outstanding. Through a range of roles, they contribute very well to the school and the wider community. Teaching is good overall because teachers prepare lessons that challenge students to do well and give feedback that enables them to know how to improve. Consequently, students are effectively engaged and enjoy their work. In the outstanding lessons there is an excellent balance between direct input from the teacher and challenging activities that enable students to develop greater independence in, and excitement from, learning. Students and teachers interact positively and productively. Guidance and support are outstanding, whether in helping students deal with personal concerns or their applications to university or work. As one student commented, there are 'excellent relationships between staff and students and an excellent support system'. The curriculum is outstanding, providing a range of advanced-level courses and a small number of alternative awards. The outstanding leaders and managers in the sixth form are passionate about its development and

effective in monitoring students' performance and improving provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend and build on strategies to improve students' independent learning skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students make good progress throughout both Key Stages 3 and 4. All students, regardless of attainment or background, do well with many reaching their personal challenging targets. Those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because their needs are met well by the teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants. The standards in 2008 and those seen during the inspection are above the national average and well above in a range of subjects including English, modern foreign languages and history. The percentage of students gaining the highest grades possible is well above the national figure in a number of subjects including English, mathematics and history. The detailed monitoring data based on GCSE module results and submitted coursework demonstrate that standards have not only been maintained this year but have improved from last year. These indicate that the challenging GCSE targets will not only be met but exceeded. The percentage of students leaving with 5A* to G is very high and demonstrates the inclusive nature of the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' attitudes to school are good. Enjoyment is good, as shown by the improved attendance, now above national figures, and the improved punctuality. The school has taken effective steps to reduce the numbers of students who are persistently absent, so this is now well below national figures. Behaviour is good overall, although there is some low-level disruption in some lessons. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and promoted by well-planned relevant religious education, citizenship and personal and social education courses throughout the school.

An innovative and successful feature of active citizenship is the junior leadership team who shadow the roles of the senior leadership team in the school. Students' leadership skills mean that preparation for future economic well-being is good and the school has already planned further improvements in work-related learning. The referral centre within the school has been highly effective in reducing the number of exclusions and in providing additional support for a small number of students in taking personal responsibility for their actions. The respect students show to one another and high levels of racial harmony and inclusion is central to the school's ethos and reflected at every level. As one parent said, teachers 'go the extra mile' to help them do well.

Students know the importance of eating healthily and healthy options are provided for them. They have opportunities to take regular exercise and participate in the good range of additional sporting opportunities. The school manages safety on a difficult site well. Students know how to manage personal risk and feel safe. Students have well-developed skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, which prepare them effectively for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. There are now significantly more good and outstanding lessons because good practice is being shared between departments and is additionally supported by appropriate in-service training. Typically, teachers plan their lessons well and use resources that meet the needs of all groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and students whose first language is not English. Teaching assistants support small student groups well during lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a suitable range of visual and information and communication technology resources to support learning. An imaginative support scheme encourages volunteer learning advisers from among the teachers themselves to support the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning throughout the school. Information and communication technology is used successfully to support students at risk of underachieving, particularly in English and mathematics. Behaviour is not a barrier to learning for most students, but there are occasions when students' learning is interrupted by low-level disruption.

Students have positive attitudes to learning, as is illustrated by their generally good response to homework tasks. In most subjects they know what they have to do to improve their work through feedback from teachers' regular assessment and marking. Peer assessment and self-assessment by students is satisfactory, although there is not enough emphasis on students learning independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The impact of the school's specialism in mathematics and computing is outstanding and that in technology has rapidly improved. In addition to mathematics, all students take statistics, at least two sciences and information and communication technology at Key Stage 4, and numbers taking technology are rising. Provision in the languages and arts within the curriculum and in additional provision is strong. It is this sheer breadth and depth that makes the curriculum outstanding overall. There is an extensive programme of community and business links. Work-related learning is an area the school has identified for further development.

The inclusive nature of the school's excellent curriculum is shown in the effective outcomes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The main curriculum is broad and balanced with suitable alternative and additional specialist provision off-site for some students in Years 10 and 11. There is good enrichment with themed days or 'drop days' run by external providers in Years 10 and 11 and an activities week in the summer term for Years 7 to 9. Opportunities for enrichment in arts, sports and a lunchtime club for students with special needs have excellent participation rates and are commented on positively by both students and parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

An exceptionally strong pastoral system underpins the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. This involves a very well-coordinated team working within school effectively with a range of external, multi-agency professionals. The school's clear structures, a comprehensive pastoral programme and positive relationships help students, including vulnerable children, to feel well cared for and safe. As one parent wrote, 'My children are very happy at this school and doing very well in their studies.' Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support to help them make good progress. Very effective use is made of the school's referral centre to reduce exclusions from lessons. Students receive very good guidance about the next stages of their education, entering the sixth form or gaining employment. Most students know of the progress they are making and their future targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The principal leads the school with passion, commitment and integrity, and he is determined to ensure that Dunraven becomes an outstanding school in every respect. He leads by example and is not afraid to acknowledge and tackle any weaknesses. For example, robust action was taken to improve those subject areas that were underperforming, and this has resulted in raised standards.

The principal is ably supported by very effective senior colleagues, and there is a strong sense of purpose and direction throughout the school. The principal and senior team embody the inclusive motto 'excellence for all' in all aspects of their work. Staff and students speak extremely warmly of their direct day-to-day involvement in school life, and they are viewed as a powerful motivating force throughout the school.

The senior team works closely with a very good team of middle leaders, who are actively involved in the leadership and management of the school. They share effective practice, and they are well supported by members of the senior team. As a result, the school is making significant progress with the aim of ensuring that the performance of all departments matches that of the very best. A culture of openness and trust permeates working relationships among senior and middle leaders. The impact of their leadership can be seen in the high-quality education provided by the school, the good progress made by students, and in the creation of a school ethos that is friendly, welcoming and mutually supportive.

The school is rightly proud of its work with a wide range of partners to provide support for students and enhance provision, especially for the more vulnerable. Students recognise and value their diverse school population, and relationships among students are excellent. The school recognises the need to carry out a more thorough audit of the needs of its local community, and to evaluate more rigorously the impact of its actions to promote community cohesion.

The governing body is very effective and plays an active role in the life of the school. Governors know the school well and provide challenge to the senior team through incisive questioning and careful monitoring of the school's performance. Governors, senior and middle leaders all share the same high aspirations for the students, and they approach their work with enthusiasm. For all the above reasons the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

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