

# Elliott School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101060
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wandsworth
<b>Inspection number</b>	354165
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Meena Wood HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	740
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	Lorraine O'Reilly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Phillips
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Pullman Gardens Putney London SW15 3DG
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8788 3421
<b>Fax number</b>	020 87898280
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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 27 lessons, observed 22 teachers, and held meetings with leaders and managers, teaching staff and students. They scrutinised the school development plan and departmental reviews, a range of school policies, local authority reviews, an interim executive board review, internal teaching and learning observations and students' work.

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

Whether teaching and assessment practice are sufficiently tailored to students' abilities and prior attainment.

How well individual students learn and the extent of their progress.

Behaviour, attendance and punctuality.

Monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment.

The capacity of leaders and managers to make sustained improvements.

## Information about the school

Elliott School is a smaller-than-average secondary school, with a growing sixth form and specialist status in languages. The school will no longer keep its specialist status as from 2011. When last inspected, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and its leaders were not demonstrating the capacity to improve it. Between September 2009 and April 2010 the school was led by an interim headteacher, whereupon a substantive headteacher was appointed. The school's interim executive board and the local authority have secured Trust Status with two local secondary schools for the school as of December 2010.

There are substantially more boys than girls on roll and the numbers on roll in the main school have reduced. The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is above average with Black African and Black Caribbean being the highest. Many students are advanced bilingual learners, but a few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is high. A higher proportion of students than usual have a statement of special educational needs, although the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities 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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Elliott School is rapidly improving and, in accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that special measures are no longer required because its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. Through strong leadership and in a relatively short space of time, the new headteacher has significantly raised the school's expectations of itself by providing a challenging vision of what students should be achieving. He has worked very effectively with his new senior leadership team and staff to instil a culture of raised aspirations. The impact of this has resulted in more cohesive management and teaching staff teams. The interim executive board and partnership that comprises representatives from the local authority, external advisers, and two local secondary schools have considerably benefited the school. They have done this by helping share good practice and expertise. Students greatly value the positive learning environment and the staff are ambitious for further improvement, providing solid evidence of the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Evaluation processes at whole-school level are sharply self-critical and fully reflect the need to raise attainment across subjects and year groups. More reliable performance data, coupled with sharper monitoring and evaluation of teaching and students' learning and progress by all managers, mean that the school has a more accurate view of itself. This has enabled a purposeful approach to putting things right.

Staff are highly committed to ensuring all students achieve their potential in lessons. A number of lessons are now of good quality, engaging students fully so their progress and attainment in the core subjects are improving sharply. Satisfactory teaching results in most students making broadly expected levels of progress, although there is variation in quality between, and within, subjects. In those lessons where teaching and assessment activities were well structured, lessons very often gave students good opportunities to discuss their learning through collaborative activities, challenged students of higher ability, while providing support for those of lower ability. In these instances, inspectors observed good levels of engagement and progress. However, in some cases, teachers are not taking into account the full range of students' prior attainment when planning lessons, and they do not check the knowledge and skills students are acquiring before moving onto the next activity.

Some aspects of assessment have improved considerably, such as the quality of written feedback on students' work and marking, although the follow up to ensure students use this information to make further progress is inconsistent. Too little emphasis is placed on developing literacy, including speaking skills across the curriculum, resulting in some weak standards of students' work.

Students' behaviour has considerably improved. Most demonstrate a willing attitude towards their learning, but students are not given sufficient opportunities to develop more

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independent learning. The school has recognised the need to prioritise detailed analysis of unacceptable behaviours and exclusions to more effectively inform its planning. A concerted drive to improve the punctuality and attendance of all students, and reduce the number regularly missing school, has paid dividends in rising attendance and improved punctuality. Nevertheless, some students' movement between lessons lack smartness and pace.

Students receive satisfactory academic guidance on their next steps in education and training. Pastoral support is satisfactory, but there is some variability in the quality of the academic support received by students, in particular those who find learning more difficult. Continuing and significant improvements to the curriculum mean it is much more relevant to students' needs, is helping students to enjoy their learning and has contributed to raising Year 11 standards year on year so that students attain broadly average GCSE standards and make satisfactory progress by the time they leave school.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise the proportion of students, attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, and accelerate the learning and progress of all students by September 2011 through:
  - improving the quality of teaching, assessment and learning objectives across all subjects to ensure that activities, tasks and pace of learning are better matched to students' abilities
  - ensuring checking of all students' learning before students move onto the next activity or task and ensuring marking enables them to improve in all subjects
  - a literacy strategy that supports students' standards of work, develops oracy skills across the curriculum and provides structured support for those with dyslexia.
- Strengthen procedures relating to behaviour by February 2011 through:
  - systematically analysing trends relating to bullying, behaviour, exclusions and attendance and using this data to inform self-evaluation processes.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching with a greater focus on the impact of assessment in enabling good learning and progress for all students and systematic sharing of good practice across subjects and key stages.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

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

**3**

The numbers of students gaining five A\* to C GCSE standards (including English and mathematics) have significantly increased over three years to within national averages. Students join the school with broadly average levels of attainment and the majority make satisfactory progress, with little variation between groups of students. Students who have more severe behavioural, emotional, social difficulties and learning difficulties achieve better than those with less severe difficulties. In the best lessons observed in English,

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mathematics, science, and geography, students are responsive to challenge through well-structured paired or group tasks, actively contribute to peer assessment discussions, visibly enjoying their work. In some lessons across all subjects, a minority of students are not achieving their potential because of low levels of challenge or inappropriate pace and activities.

The school's own data suggest continuing improvement for current Year 11 students and this was confirmed by inspectors' observations of the standard of work in students' books during lessons. The school's literacy strategy has not had sufficient impact in addressing common weaknesses in spelling, grammar and punctuation, across all subjects and year groups. Standards of some students' written work, especially those of lower ability, are not therefore, fully reflective of their potential, especially in terms of presentation and layout.

Students report that the school is a safe environment. They have a satisfactory awareness of healthy lifestyles. Students' spiritual and moral awareness and cultural and social development are satisfactory, with increasing opportunities in subjects, such as through the study of global musical heritages. Exclusions and persistent absences have reduced since the last inspection, but there has been a recent increase in internal exclusions due to a more rigorous focus on behaviour management. Students report that they wish to be more proactive in shaping school activities and contributing to their local communities, although a number participate effectively in local charity work.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

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

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## How effective is the provision?

Most teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and, in the best lessons observed by inspectors, use this effectively to inspire learning. In a good religious education lesson, students were skilfully guided to apply their knowledge in assessing their own and each others' work through a whole-class focus displayed on an interactive whiteboard. In an English lesson, learning objectives based on students' targets and effective use of peer and self-assessment by the teacher, encouraged good levels of progress. However, there is variation within subjects, especially where teachers and support staff do not consistently plan lesson activities, tasks and the pace of lessons in line with the wide range of students' needs. This results in too much teacher input and whole-class activities for long periods of time. In these instances, too few students respond to questions or participate in discussions and a minority of students waste time in social chatter. In a few French, mathematics and history lessons, despite some significant improvements in teaching and assessment, inspectors observed too much emphasis on teacher talk and insufficient opportunity for students to discuss their knowledge and demonstrate their skills.

In general, too little use is made of effective assessment activities to check all students' learning before moving on to the next activity or revising a lesson activity in response to students not understanding particular tasks or concepts. The marking of students' work has greatly improved with some very detailed marking in place. Nevertheless, there is still some inconsistency across subjects and not all teachers ensure that students use the information to improve. Although, some good examples of targeted work are in place that help students to improve against their learning objectives. Interventions for underachieving students include additional focus on exam skills and course work and one-to-one tuition. Initial assessments and structured support for some students with dyslexia are not sufficiently timely or effective.

Since September students are following a wider range of courses, such as health and social care, carpentry, media and film studies. The BTEC range of qualifications is enabling a number of Year 11 students to gain good outcomes. Suitable accreditations for students with learning difficulties are in place and there are plans for offering functional skills and financial literacy to develop students' life skills. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and clubs is enjoyed by students. The school's specialist languages status has led to some effective partnerships with local primary schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has worked successfully with his deputy heads to transform the learning culture of the school. This development is highly valued by staff, students, parents and members of the governing body. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection; delegated leadership and management, and greater staff accountability are more effective.

The school development plan and actions reflect the school priorities. Much greater emphasis on analysis of performance data by senior and middle managers is ensuring appropriate support for underachieving students. Self-evaluation by departmental managers evidences the impact of the curriculum and teaching on students' achievement, with strategies on how to improve. Monitoring of these by senior leaders is rigorous.

Joint observations of lessons with senior managers were conducted by inspectors. For the most part, these demonstrated rigour and accuracy in the school's monitoring procedures of the quality of teaching and learning. This has clearly contributed to raising staff expectations and successfully raising attainment in 2010. Nevertheless, the school's internal lesson observations are not consistently focused on the impact of assessment in learning and whether all groups of students make the good progress of which they are capable. The school is disseminating the good practice it has identified in the main school and the sixth form through systematic professional development. In response to significant underachievement in history, senior leaders are taking suitable actions to strengthen the quality of students' learning experiences and their outcomes.

Safeguarding procedures are sufficient to ensure students' safety. In line with its equalities policy, the school has recognised, and is remedying, the monitoring of behaviour-related incidents and follow-through to make them more rigorous.

The school inherited a financial deficit and established a recovery plan, therefore, in view of the improving attainment, the school now gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's focus on community activities and partnerships is still developing under the new headteacher, who clearly communicates to parents and carers the positive changes in the school, through the parents' forum and council.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

Since the last inspection leadership and management of the sixth form and the capacity to improve it continue to be good. Robust monitoring of performance data and the quality of teaching has had a positive impact on students' learning experiences and outcomes. In addition, tracking and monitoring arrangements of students' progress are effective. Academic guidance is sound as students have opportunities to review their personal learning targets and receive feedback on their progress against their targets.

Outcomes are good. A-level standards are above national averages and AS-level standards are improving in line with national averages. The numbers of students achieving high grades has declined in 2010 and is now in line with national averages. National published data over three years indicate that most students, who enter the sixth form with broadly average levels of GCSE attainment, are helped to make good progress. The numbers of students progressing from Year 12 to Year 13 have declined in the last two years. However, numbers progressing to further education, training and work in Years 13 and 14 are high. There is a strong emphasis on extra-curricular activities that encourage students' development of academic, social and personal skills. The 'Democracy Wall' allows students to express their opinions and encourages good debating and citizenship skills. A strength of the sixth form is the increasing range of responsibilities for students as academic mentors, 'buddy readers' and leading after-school activities for younger students.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
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**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## **Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



2 December 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Elliott School, London SW15 3DG**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to you. When the school was inspected a year ago it was found not to be doing a good enough job in helping you achieve well. The new headteacher and staff have worked hard so that it has improved quickly and no longer requires special measures. Many of you told us the school is now a much more positive place to be.

Most of you make satisfactory progress in your learning between Years 7 and 11. Your examination standards have improved and, in 2010, Year 11 students attained broadly average GCSE standards. The school is helping current Year 11 students to make even better progress and attain higher grades.

The care, guidance and support you receive are satisfactory. The school is committed to increasing your external and internal responsibilities.

The school's curriculum is increasingly helping you to improve your attainment and enjoy your learning more.

Sixth form students achieve good outcomes owing to the good monitoring and tracking of your learning and the breadth of extra-curricular activities you follow.

To help the school improve further, the school's leaders have agreed to ensure that:

all teachers consistently match lesson activities more closely to your abilities, involve all of you in your learning and check your learning more closely in lessons

you are helped to produce better standards of work through more guidance on presentation, spelling and grammar

there is closer monitoring of why some of you misbehave and are excluded

all teaching is good across the school so that the progress you make is good.

You can play your part by regularly attending school and being punctual to lessons. We wish you all the best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood

Her Majesty's Inspector

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