

Stratford School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102788
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	355260
Inspection dates	31 March 2011–1 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	900
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Swallow
Headteacher	Andrew Seager
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Twenty-seven parts of lessons were observed, taught by 25 teachers. Meetings were held with students, staff and five members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation as well as questionnaires completed by 37 parents and carers, 162 students and 72 staff.

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

- The accuracy of the school's analysis of students' attainment and progress.
- The accuracy of the school's evaluation of the quality of learning.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in engaging all groups of students and in raising achievement. Whether staff at all levels made a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of the school.
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Information about the school

Stratford is a local comprehensive school for students who come from a wide range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. There are fewer girls than boys and the vast majority of students are from minority ethnic groups, mainly of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. Most students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally. The school operates on two sites and has had specialist mathematics and computing status since 2005. It was awarded Healthy School status in 2007.

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

Stratford School provides a good education for students with wide-ranging abilities, interests and needs. The school is a lively, friendly community where students attend regularly, feel safe and receive good care, guidance and support. Relationships between students from different ethnic and social groups are harmonious and students report that they feel safe. If any anti-social or racist behaviour occurs between students it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. The broad curriculum extends and enriches students' experiences in school and the local community. It provides good opportunities for students from different backgrounds and of different ages to interact and work together well, which supports their good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

Students start school with attainment that is broadly average, although many have low levels of literacy. They make good progress to achieve standards at GCSE which are just above the national average. Students do particularly well in mathematics and statistics with a higher percentage of students achieving the highest grades compared to national figures. Since the last inspection, the school has made more consistent use of assessment and performance data to set all students realistic and challenging targets. Students' progress towards these targets is monitored closely by individual teachers and leaders of departments who have an accurate view of the achievement of the students they teach. Actions taken to tackle any underperformance are generally effective and there are minimal differences in the achievement of different groups across the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language, gifted and talented pupils, and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or disaffected. However, there is not an agreed view of whole-school achievement that is shared across the staff. The vertical tutor system overseen by heads of the houses has increased the capacity of middle leaders to monitor and evaluate the progress of groups and individuals across the school and is developing a broader view of students' achievement. Self-evaluation is accurate and, although there are many recognised strengths in provision, precise evidence of the impact of the school's work on students' outcomes is not recorded and evaluated systematically. This limits the potential for the school to move to achieving outstanding outcomes.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher and senior leaders have placed a high priority on improving professional development and increasing accountability across departments. Teaching is mostly good or outstanding and the quality of learning consistently good. The capacity of subject leaders and heads of house to manage improvements within their areas of responsibility has increased. Senior leaders communicate high expectations about securing improvement and have introduced significant changes to key areas of the school's work during the last two years. This has created a divergence of views across the staff. Despite this, all staff share a strong commitment to ensuring that all students are

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given equal opportunities to learn and to achieve the very best outcomes. This underpins the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the outcomes for students further by:
 - providing a sharper analysis of their achievement across the school that can be shared with staff at all levels
 - gathering exact and accurate evidence of the impact of the school's actions on the performance and experiences of students
 - ensuring that the heads of house and tutors play a lead role in monitoring and evaluating the progress of groups and individuals.ensuring that the heads of house and tutors play a lead role in monitoring and evaluating the progress of groups and individuals.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In the large majority of lessons, the quality of learning is at least good because teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons that cater for all abilities. Students are keen to learn and their good behaviour and concentration in lessons makes a strong contribution to their learning. Students respond well and make outstanding progress in lessons that allow them to become actively involved in their learning and provide them with meaningful feedback on their work. All groups make broadly comparable progress, although there is some variation year on year. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are potentially vulnerable make the same progress as their peers because they receive personalised intervention and guidance, which makes an important contribution to their quality of learning.

Students value the school community because they feel safe and well cared for. They have a good understanding of the risks which affect their health and well-being and most respond well to the school's efforts to promote healthy lifestyles by participating in a range of extra-curricular activities and voluntary sports clubs. Behaviour around the school is good. Regardless of the overcrowded conditions and limited outdoor space, students show respect for each other and the environment. Students are keen to express their views about the school and their learning. They contribute well to the school community by taking on posts of responsibility in the student leadership team and joining committees to organise fund-raising and charity events.

Students are well equipped to succeed in their future lives because they learn how to apply good skills in numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology as they move through the school. They develop workplace skills and personal qualities because many lessons are planned so that students pose questions, work in groups and solve problems collaboratively. All students continue to education, employment or training when they leave school.

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching and learning is good or outstanding because there is a strong focus on using assessment to support learning. In good and outstanding lessons, students engage enthusiastically because of high expectations, challenging activities and a lively pace. For example, Year 7 history students were challenged to pose questions about the content of a portrait and to use their prior learning to assess its authenticity. Students who were making deductions less quickly were given carefully chosen prompts to consolidate their knowledge so that their learning kept pace with the most able. By the end of the lesson, all students had acquired the necessary knowledge, confidence and skills to tackle a piece of extended writing. Although students know their targets, they are not always sure about how to improve their work because learning is not consistently supported in lessons by constructive feedback, whether it be through meaningful dialogue, peer or self-assessment, or detailed marking.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has been reviewed and adapted so that it is relevant to the needs and interests of the students and the context of the school. The specialism is used well to raise attainment, and provision at the arts and technology centre is particularly effective in engaging and inspiring students' learning and skills. The school recognises the need to further extend the breadth and progression of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 to effectively build on what students have learned at Key Stage 2 and to equip them with the necessary skills to take full advantage of the broad provision at Key Stage 4.

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The school knows and understands the needs of students and their families, and provides well targeted care and support to help students make good progress whatever challenges they may face. Good guidance is provided for students when they transfer from primary school, when they choose options at the end of Year 9 and for their future choices when they leave school.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are fully committed to sustaining improvement. There are a range of rigorous processes to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and track students' achievement but self-evaluation is not precise enough to identify what needs to be done to move towards outstanding outcomes. The school lacks high-quality, challenging analyses of its effectiveness that can be used to secure outstanding performance. Members of staff hold divided opinions about some of the recent initiatives introduced by senior leaders. In spite of this, there is a shared commitment to promote students' learning and well-being which has sustained consistently good outcomes.

A strong commitment to ensuring the safety of students and to promoting equality of opportunity is well established throughout the school community. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated or condoned. The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding well and works with a range of external agencies such as health and social services to promote the safety, health and welfare of all students.

The governing body is well organised and governors discharge their statutory duties effectively. Since the last inspection, members of the governing body have increased their knowledge of the school and are becoming more strategically involved in improvement planning.

The school has a clear understanding of its religious, ethnic and social-economic context and there is an effective strategy to promote community cohesion. It values the diversity of the school community and works closely and effectively with local partners, but the drive to promote links in a national and global context is less well developed. The school actively encourages parents and carers to engage with the school and strives to help them support their children's learning. The vertical tutor system is being developed to establish closer links with parents and carers and to provide clearer information about the progress that each student is making across subjects.

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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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A very small proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. A majority of those who responded feel that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. Inspection evidence supports this view. A few parents were concerned about the support given by the school to help their children have a healthy lifestyle and the opportunities provided for them to support their children's learning. Inspectors found during this inspection that provision for both these aspects of the school's work was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stratford 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 900 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	24	22	59	2	5	4	11
The school keeps my child safe	6	16	27	73	2	5	2	5
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	41	15	41	4	11	2	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	27	18	49	8	22	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	7	19	21	57	8	22	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	22	19	51	6	16	4	11
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	19	23	62	3	8	4	11
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)	12	32	16	43	5	14	3	8
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	24	20	54	7	19	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	41	14	38	4	11	4	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	14	22	59	6	16	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	8	22	23	62	3	8	3	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	14	26	70	2	5	4	11

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 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 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.

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.



4 April 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Stratford School, Newham E7 9PR.

Thank you for the friendly and polite welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. Your school is providing you with a good education and helping you to make good progress in your learning. We were very pleased to see that you get on well together and value and respect each other's differences. We were also impressed with your good behaviour in lessons and around the school.

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. We observed some lively and challenging lessons that made you work hard and think for yourselves. You have opportunities to study many different subjects across the curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and the school prepares you well for your future work, training or education. Although you were unsure about the vertical tutoring system when it was introduced, you told us that you like it now and enjoy having the chance to mix with other age groups.

The senior leaders, the heads of department and your teachers have high expectations of you and are very committed to helping you learn. We have asked them to be even better at identifying what could improve your learning and well-being and then share these ideas. We also asked the heads of house and the tutors to keep a careful record of everyone's progress. All of you can help by doing your best and letting your teachers know what helps you learn better.

We wish you all at Stratford School a very happy and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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