

Langdon Park Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100966
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	354922
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	892
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Wright
Headteacher	Chris Dunne
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 39 part lessons, each taught by a different teacher, undertaking three joint observations with school staff. They held meetings with staff, students and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation form, its monitoring records of students' progress towards their targets, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, and the school improvement plan. They considered responses to questionnaires completed by 120 parents and carers, 170 students and 26 staff.

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

- The effectiveness of school leaders in closing the gaps in attainment between different groups of students, especially those who are of White British heritage.
- How well middle leaders use the outcomes of self-evaluation to drive improvements in their curriculum area.
- How well teachers use assessment data and individual learning targets to help students make more progress in lessons.
- The impact of the school's specialist status on promoting community cohesion and students' future economic well-being.

Information about the school

The school is average in size and is the 'hub' of the local Schools Sport Partnership. It works closely with seven local primary schools which are part of the Poplar Partnership. The school has been designated as a specialist sports college since 2005. The proportions of students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who speak English as an additional language are high. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much greater than that usually found, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. These students have a variety of needs, mostly relating to behavioural and emotional and specific learning difficulties. The majority of students are of Bangladeshi heritage, with the next largest group comprising students of White British heritage. The school has awards for several aspects of its work, including Healthy Schools status and the Sportsmark award for physical education and sport.

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

This is a good school. Many aspects of its work are outstanding. Good progress has been made since the last inspection because remarkable leadership has embedded high expectations of what students can achieve. There is a strong focus on raising students' achievement and developing them personally through enhancing confidence and self-esteem. Students make good progress, and sometimes outstanding progress, throughout the school so that, by the end of Year 11, their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. School leaders have been successful in creating a culture where academic learning and students' personal development are valued equally. This results in good achievement and outstanding spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. As one parent commented, 'My child has been able to achieve lots at Langdon Park and has made friends for life. He feels safe and really enjoys school.'

The Poplar Partnership with several local primary schools has been successful in generating and putting into practice thoughtful ideas on how to deepen the engagement of parents and carers with their child's learning. Official, government-sponsored delegations from several countries have visited the school to observe outstanding practice in physical education and sport. Through these very effective partnerships, Langdon Park students have had the opportunity to engage purposefully with like students in those countries. This is one example of the outstanding impact of the school's specialist status on community cohesion and students' future economic well-being.

The school knows that the quality of teaching and learning is at the heart of improved performance. School leaders' quest for high-quality teaching is evident in the continual and very successful review of classroom practice based upon close monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. As a result, students progress well in lessons that, in the main, are lively, interesting and well paced. Occasionally, teachers do not share with students well enough what they need to do to make good progress in the lesson. As a result, in these instances, more-able students do not always make the maximum progress. Additionally, sometimes, teachers do not use the school's rich assessment information well enough to set subject-related individual learning targets and monitor the progress of students against them. However, school leaders recognise that although there is much good practice in these areas, opportunities to share this between faculties have thus far been limited.

Detailed and accurate self-evaluation has successfully enabled school leaders, including the governing body, to identify clearly the key priorities for improvement. Consistently average attendance and rising persistent absence focused school leaders' attention on these areas with the result that outcomes improved significantly this year. High attendance has had a significant impact in improving students' achievement, particularly the vast majority who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the relatively

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small proportion who are of White British heritage. This, coupled with the provision of a well-thought-through and stimulating curriculum, has resulted in the gaps in attainment between key groups closing fast. This is a convincing example of the school's good track record in bringing about demonstrable improvements that show every sign of being sustainable, and a strong indication of the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching so that the large majority is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring all teachers sharpen and refine their use of assessment data to set, monitor and review individual students' learning targets
 - systematically sharing with students what they need to do to make good progress in the lesson
 - ensuring that marking is sharply focused on the next steps for individual students' learning and that clear feedback is given to students based on these
 - systematically sharing between faculties the frequent good practice seen in lessons to achieve the above.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students' attainment by the end of Year 11 in English and mathematics is broadly average and rising. The school's secure tracking data show that current Year 11 students are on track to reach the national average for the five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, threshold indicator. In relation to their below-average starting points, this demonstrates good progress. Students are motivated and show good attitudes to learning. As a result, they usually make good progress, and sometimes outstanding progress, in lessons. For example, Year 10 students really enjoyed presenting to the class the key aspects of the well-known novel *Of Mice and Men* in one minute. Group responses to provocative statements, such as, 'The poor deserve what they get', enabled students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make very good progress. Boys in particular in a Year 8 dance lesson enjoyed performing duets and perfecting their dynamics. Good progress was evident through the ensuing discussion about whether it is the audience or the performers who create the atmosphere. A less-able group of Year 9 students benefited from their teachers' good questioning about distance-time graphs in a mathematics lesson. Students successfully developed their literacy skills at the same time as they gave a full written explanation of the journeys the graphs were depicting. As a result of good prompting, modelling and, sometimes, one-to-one or small-group intensive coaching, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as students who speak English as an additional language, make securely good progress.

The very successful Schools Sport Partnership gives students excellent opportunities to enhance their fitness and build their stamina. This, coupled with a responsive curriculum, gives students a good understanding of healthy lifestyles that reflects the school's Healthy Schools status. Students feel very safe and secure in the caring atmosphere that envelops them. Students are highly active in their school and in the local community. For example,

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Year 10 students successfully mentor Year 7 students in conflict resolution, one example of students' exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students of Langdon Park, including members of the very active school council, were instrumental in the local campaign to build a new station, Langdon Park, on the DLR line which serves the school and the local community. Students' enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance, and this is coupled with their good punctuality. Students are involved at a high level in organising major events, for example the 'Global Games' programme next week involving 150 local primary school pupils and an equivalent number of pupils in linked schools in Zambia. Former students of Langdon Park, now in further or higher education, are involved in running very successful academic mentoring programmes for current Year 10 and 11 students. Programmes such as the above are very effective in developing the essential wider qualities and life skills that students need to succeed in the future.

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	3
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	2
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:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons follow a clear structure but with the flexibility to deviate slightly, as dictated by the learning needs of students. Teachers place a strong emphasis on learning and most show considerable skill in managing students' behaviour and using a variety of resources to support learning. As a result, students work hard and apply themselves well. Teachers encourage students to engage in discussion and ask questions. A key strength is the

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opportunities most teachers provide for students to demonstrate their learning in different ways. Clear progression can be seen in students' work as a result of these teachers consistently and effectively applying this strategy. Most lessons are well planned to take account of the range of abilities in each class. However, occasionally the needs of some individuals, for example more-able students, are not catered for fully in such a way that they can consistently make rapid progress. In addition, marking does not always focus sharply enough on the next steps that students need to take to reach a higher level of attainment. Nevertheless, students make good progress, and achieve well by the end of Year 11.

The curriculum is imaginative and increasingly well tailored to the needs of individual students. The school has successfully re-designed the physical education and sports curriculum so that all Year 10 students are engaged in an accredited course, reflecting well the school's sports college specialism and Sportsmark status. The 'Transition' curriculum for a group of Year 7 students vulnerable due to their circumstances supports them well in their first year of high school. The integrated approach to the English and humanities curriculum in early Key Stage 3 has had a positive impact on students' attitudes to learning. The school has been responsive to students' emerging needs, for example in the range of pathways and options now offered at Key Stage 4. Extra-curricular contributions from physical education and sport are especially strong.

The weekly 'Highlighting Team' meetings have wide representation and are very successful in identifying students who need support. Very well-targeted support enables all students, including some with very distinct additional needs, to make good and sometimes excellent personal and academic progress. Teaching assistants actively engage with students and support their learning effectively. For example, small-group interventions provide effective vehicles for intensive coaching to support good progress. Students' attendance was average at the time of the previous inspection. The very effective systems and structures introduced to improve it have resulted in attendance now being high, and the proportion of persistent absentees has been dramatically reduced.

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?

School leaders, led very effectively by an inspirational headteacher, have been highly successful in embedding a culture of continuous improvement within the school community. As a result, major improvements have been made in the quality of provision and student outcomes over the past few years. Teachers are clearly inspired by the vision

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and clear sense of direction. As one teacher remarked, 'This school is a fantastic place where the staff and leadership work incredibly hard for each individual student.'

School self-evaluation has improved, including at middle leadership level, and most areas of underperformance are tackled effectively. For example, the school has developed effective practical plans based on individual students' progress to ensure that it achieves stretching targets. The tracking and monitoring of students' progress data are good, and the impact of this is seen in the rate of progress across many areas of the curriculum, including English and mathematics. The drive to improve teaching is at the centre of the work of the headteacher and his senior team. However, there is a small degree of variation in the depth and rigour with which middle leaders tackle the need to remove the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

The governing body supports and challenges the school leadership effectively, for example in relation to the rigorous annual target-setting process and in the strategic analysis of key aspects of provision. Its handle on financial management is secure. The school adopts excellent and very effective practices across all areas of its work in safeguarding. The school is very proactive in its dealings with a wide range of agencies, for example through the weekly meetings of the 'Highlighting Team' who discuss and put together support packages for students vulnerable due to their circumstances.

Equality of opportunity and overcoming discrimination are very actively promoted across all areas of the school. Students from diverse backgrounds are given frequent opportunities to make a significant contribution to the school and local community. Gaps in attainment between different groups have been closing very rapidly. For example, the vast majority of students known to be eligible for free school meals are now on track to completely close the attainment gap with the rest and attain the national average on the five good GCSEs including English and mathematics threshold measure. The attainment of the small proportion of students of White British heritage in the current Year 11 has improved dramatically this year and the gap with the rest is closing fast. Bangladeshi students who comprise the majority of the students reach national standards and, on some measures, exceed them. The school understands its context extremely well and leaders have been highly successful in creating a thriving community with a very strong sense of shared values. The school's sports specialism has been used admirably well to establish strong links with local schools, and with schools in Zambia, Puerto Rico and Pakistan, for example. These links deepen students' experiences of other communities and make a highly effective contribution to outstanding community cohesion.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire is low compared with the national average for secondary schools. Of these, the vast majority are very supportive of the school and very happy with their child's experience at the school and with what it provides for them. The small number of parental and carer concerns related to the school not taking sufficient account of their suggestions and concerns, and the effectiveness of the school in dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection findings show that the school has been successfully reaching out to parents and carers. It has increased significantly the numbers that attend regular student progress review meetings where parents and carers are consulted about their child's progress against their targets. Effective systems for promoting good behaviour have been put in place, for example a range of prevention and intervention strategies, and these have the desired impact.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Langdon Park Community 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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 892 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	28	83	69	1	1	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	28	82	68	3	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	31	78	65	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	21	84	70	10	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	23	89	74	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	20	80	67	9	8	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	15	92	77	9	8	1	1
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)	30	25	75	63	8	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	17	87	73	8	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	21	79	66	13	11	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	13	83	69	16	13	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	30	25	78	65	5	4	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	38	69	58	6	5	2	2

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.



13 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Langdon Park Community School, London E14 0RZ

I would like to thank you all for your help during our visit to your school. We found what you had to say very helpful in informing our judgements about your school. We were delighted to see so many of you willingly take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly those linked with your school's sports college specialism. We were especially impressed with the opportunities you have to assume leadership roles and the contribution you make to your local community.

We judged that your school provides you with a good education. It has many outstanding features. For example, you have an excellent understanding of personal safety, and the care, guidance and support you receive is a remarkable strength of the school. Excellent strategic leadership makes very good use of a wide range of partnerships to support your learning. You told us that you found teaching to be of good quality, and it was apparent that most lessons were interesting because they involved you actively in learning. We judged the quality of teaching to be good, with many improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum is well matched to the range of needs you have and makes a strong contribution to your good learning. As a result, your attainment is rising and you achieve national averages by the end of Year 11. The global links that your school has established through its sports college specialism are very impressive.

Your headteacher and his senior team have made good progress since the previous inspection. We worked closely with him and he agrees with our conclusions on what the school should do to make it even better. We have asked the school to ensure all teachers:

- make sharper use of assessment information to set and monitor individual student targets and give you better guidance on how to improve your work when marking.

You can help by maintaining your excellent attendance and working hard to achieve your targets, and perhaps even exceeding them.

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt

Lead inspector

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