

Ickburgh School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100312
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	354833
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patric Corrigan
Headteacher	Shirley-Anne Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons and 11 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, staff and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation about the school's planning and assessment, curriculum development, the latest report from the School Improvement Partner, and records of the monitoring of teaching and the pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed all safeguarding records and documents relating to the management of the school. The inspectors also took into consideration questionnaires returned by 13 parents and carers, 30 staff and 53 pupils.

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

- The school's effectiveness in assessing and recording achievement in both basic skills and personal development to ensure that the learning targets for all pupils challenge them to make the best progress that they can.
- The degree to which teaching and the curriculum are effectively adapted to the learning needs of each pupil.
- The outcomes for pupils and the quality of provision within the Early Years Foundation Unit and the post-16 Student Centre.
- The quality of the school's self-evaluation and development planning by leaders at all levels in order to monitor provision and drive improvement.

Information about the school

The school provides for pupils with complex and severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high and over two thirds speak English as an additional language. The pupils are from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils live within the Borough of Hackney but some come from outside its boundaries. The school is federated with Downsview School, a local special school, and has the same headteacher and governing body.

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

Ickburgh is a good school. There are significant strengths in the first-rate care, guidance and support the school provides, which means that pupils feel very safe and their behaviour is outstanding. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard and value the quality of the school's 'support and understanding of my child's needs', as one parent put it. They particularly value the attention given to the pupils' pastoral care and well-being, and the partnerships they feel they share with the school in supporting their children.

All pupils, no matter what their needs and difficulties, receive good teaching. It is not appropriate to compare their attainment to national benchmarks but all pupils make good progress both academically and in their personal development. The school is developing its good curriculum well to ensure it is broad and balanced, and that there are many real-life experiences to enhance the pupils' learning. Activities are carefully adjusted to match the interests and abilities of the pupils, and this motivates them and helps to promote their learning. As a consequence, the pupils enjoy school and have above-average attendance when their medical needs permit. The school is rigorous in keeping pupils safe and works successfully in partnership with other agencies to ensure their welfare. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the school's work and helps to explain why the school is a cohesive community.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well. They make good progress in their learning and personal development because their teachers know them well and create clear personalised learning activities for them in very small, achievable steps. This attention to individual needs is a strength of the school's work. Adults carefully record each small improvement in the pupils' learning and provide activities which interest the pupils, and motivate and challenge them to make progress to the next stage. . As a result, the pupils are successful in meeting, and in a majority of cases exceeding, their personal learning targets. Very few pupils are able to use language successfully. In consistently and effectively using a variety of symbols, signs and electronic switches, teachers ensure that all the pupils, including those who are at the early stages of learning English, have full access to all learning opportunities and achieve well. Sixth form students also achieve well through personalised learning activities which help them apply their basic skills to develop their independence and awareness of choices and which effectively prepare them for their adult lives.

The school is well led. The headteacher and senior team have high expectations of the staff and pupils. Morale is good. Staff are very clear about the school's qualities and direction, and are proud to be members of the school community. The federation with Downsview school has enabled senior staff to concentrate on aspects of leadership and management in both schools. This has resulted in more focused planning across the federation, and has facilitated shared staff training and the dissemination of good practice.

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Rigorous monitoring and accurate self-evaluation by the senior team at Ickburgh have enabled the right priorities for improvement to be set in order to maintain the pace of development and to drive up standards. As a result, there is a good capacity for sustained improvement, and the school provides good value for money. A minority of support staff would wish to be more involved in decision taking and improvement planning. This would enable staff at all levels to contribute positively to the school's development. The governing body appropriately challenges and supports the school. Members ensure that all pupils are safe and that they achieve well. On occasion, however, they have not been made sufficiently aware of their duties to monitor and agree the school's policies.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish appropriate structures to ensure governors monitor and agree all school policies and procedures.
- Develop procedures to involve staff at all levels in the school's planning for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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:	2
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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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How effective is the provision?

Lessons are typified by warm relationships which support the good learning. The organisation of learning is good and adds pace and interest to lessons. Occasionally, the pace drops as teachers wait for pupils' responses but this is balanced by the high degree of skilled individual support pupils receive from teachers and other adults. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and feel confident to try new things. Teachers assess and record the pupils' progress effectively. This enables them to plan for and provide work that matches pupils' needs, and they know their pupils very well.

A strength of the school's good curriculum is in the effective way teachers adapt learning for individual pupils. The teachers' effective lesson planning within themes ensures that the basic skills in communication, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are threaded appropriately through the pupils' activities. There are good opportunities for personal development through the wide range of extra activities which take the pupils into the community and show them that learning can take place in every situation. This has a good impact on developing their social and independence skills.

All the pupils, and their learning and personal needs, are known extremely well to the staff. Adults work closely together to provide each pupil with very well-organised and carefully targeted support. The pupils' medical needs are managed very carefully and with consideration for the pupils' dignity. All the pupils have circumstances or needs which make them vulnerable. They all have key workers among the staff who oversee their educational and care needs. The good partnerships with a range of health and social care professionals support the pupils' well-being very well and parents and carers appreciate their input. Most of the pupils have chronic and debilitating medical needs necessitating periods in hospital but they make every effort to attend when they are well enough. The school monitors these absences rigorously, not least to be able to offer appropriate support to families at these times.

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?

The headteacher is dedicated to the well-being and progress of the pupils. She continually seeks improvement in the school. She is well supported by a senior team who are developing their skills by taking responsibility in both schools of the federation. There are rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching standards and the curriculum, and so further strengthening the effectiveness of leadership and management. Senior staff routinely investigate the pupils' progress and intervene quickly to fine-tune learning

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activities for individuals. This plays a valuable role in ensuring every pupil learns well. Planning for continued improvement is well constructed and sets a clear agenda for the school's development. There is, however, insufficient involvement of all staff in the planning process and, because of this, a minority of staff sometimes do not feel valued. The governing body plays an influential role in monitoring the pupils' well-being, care and their educational progress. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are secure and they provide a good level of challenge and support to the school. There are a few instances where governors have not formally monitored and agreed some of the school's policies and procedures.

The school makes good use of a range of outside health professionals, the other federated school, and the local and wider London community to bring in extra resources and support curriculum enrichment. Relationships with parents and carers are good and they have a high regard for the school. The continual action to promote equality of opportunity has resulted in sustained improvement in the performance and participation of all pupils. The respect for each individual is central to the school's ethos. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Social cohesion is a strong driving force within the school. Pupils and staff make a strong contribution to their own and the local community, and pupils have good experiences of customs and religious and cultural differences in the wider community.

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	3
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage lays down secure foundations for the children's future learning. The positive views of parents and carers about the interesting and safe environment are accurate. The children learn effectively through personalised activities well matched to their development and needs. They have trusting relationships with adults

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and they feel safe and secure. They engage well with their activities, they try hard to do well, and they enjoy being at school.

The provision is well managed by a skilled and knowledgeable teacher who is committed to ensuring the children's progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

Students make good progress because they continue to benefit from a personalised curriculum with a high degree of individual support. All the students' learning is accredited within a recent extensively revised programme of activities. This gives the students opportunities to develop basic skills in a framework of practical activities such as leisure pursuits, cooking and life skills, and in completing 'jobs' around the school. The students enjoy their experiences and have good attitudes to their learning. Staff consistently encourage the students into greater independence and promote their good personal development. The provision is effective in preparing students for life after school and in encouraging their participation in further education. Leadership and management are good but the senior team is aware that as the provision develops, more management time will be needed to ensure standards continue to rise.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
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

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the way their children are educated and nurtured in the school. Negative responses were few, with no trends emerging. A minority of parents and carers felt that the staff did not always help them to support their children's learning. During this inspection, inspectors found no evidence to support the views of a very small proportion of parents and carers who criticised all aspects of the

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school. Almost all parents and carers say that their children like school and that overall, they are happy with their children's educational experience.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ickburgh 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 13 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 73 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	61	4	31	1	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	61	5	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	61	4	31	1	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	46	5	38	1	7	1	7
The teaching is good at this school	7	53	5	38	0	0	1	7
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	38	5	38	2	15	1	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	38	5	38	1	7	1	7
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)	3	23	7	53	0	0	1	7
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	46	5	38	1	7	1	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	46	6	46	0	0	1	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	53	4	31	1	7	1	7
The school is led and managed effectively	6	46	4	31	0	0	1	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	53	5	38	0	0	1	7

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.



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ickburgh School, Hackney E5 8AD

When we came to your school, we enjoyed talking to you in the classrooms and dining room. Well done everyone! You go to a good school. Here are some things we judged to be good.

- You make good progress because teachers make sure you do interesting things which are just hard enough for you.
- You behave very well and look after each other.
- You showed us that you enjoy school. You have really helped to make your school a friendly community.
- All the adults look after you very well. They make sure you all enjoy school and learn well.
- You are very safe at school.

To make the school even better, there are a few things we want the adults to do.

- Make sure that every member of staff helps to plan how the school will improve further.
- Make sure the governors of the school always check the school's policies to make sure they agree with them.

All of you can help too, by always trying your best and coming to school as often as you can.

Yours sincerely

Mel Blackband Lead inspector

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