

Ernest Bevin College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101053
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	376506
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Raeside HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1275
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	375
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Benton
Principals	Mr Mike Chivers and Ms Rukhsana Sheikh
Date of previous school inspection	28 February–1 March 2007
School address	Beechcroft Road Tooting London SW17 7DF
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The team observed 45 lessons taught by 45 teachers, 11 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors observed the college's work and looked closely at its analysis of students' progress and attainment. Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, staff and community partners; in addition, a telephone discussion was held with the local authority adviser. Inspectors also scrutinised the college improvement plan, policies, reports from the local authority adviser and records of school improvement work. They considered responses to questionnaires from 414 parents and carers, 180 students and 75 staff.

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

- How effective the college has been in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- How effectively the college maximises progress for all groups of students.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form.
- The quality of achievement for the most able students.

Information about the school

Ernest Bevin College is a larger than average boys' school. The great majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and over half speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly higher than the national average; a slightly lower than average number have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. Ernest Bevin is a specialist college for sport, mathematics and computing. It recently gained International School status and will be a training camp for the 2012 Olympic Games.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Ernest Bevin College achieves its aim, to ensure that every student 'has the opportunity to succeed in a supportive environment built on mutual respect'. The inspirational leadership provided by the co-Principals has instilled self-belief and high aspirations in both students and staff. The college community is diverse, cohesive and harmonious. The boys are mutually respectful and have a keen understanding of different cultural experiences and beliefs, based on first-hand experience. Senior leaders carefully monitor the progress and success of all groups of students, taking immediate action if anyone falls behind. Throughout the inspection students were polite, welcoming and courteous. They spoke, with feeling, about their pride in the college and in their learning. They are well focused on success and understand that their teachers want the very best for them. Their good behaviour and their high attendance levels indicate how much they enjoy being at the college. One parent commented that, since joining Ernest Bevin, his son, 'seems a completely confident young man, bursting with enthusiasm for his new school'.

Students feel very safe at college and their parents and carers strongly agree that they are kept safe. Stringent attention is given to all aspects of child protection and safeguarding. The sports specialism makes an outstanding contribution to every aspect of the college, greatly enhancing the curriculum and promoting an extremely well-developed understanding of health and fitness among the boys. The college is rightly proud to have had its facilities selected as a training camp for the 2012 Olympics Games. Highly effective partnerships inform every aspect of college life. Links with external agencies range from support for vulnerable students, such as a family therapy project, to projects with top-flight football and rugby clubs and visits from Olympic gold medal winners.

Rigorous systems of assessment and ambitious target-setting have raised attainment and aspirations. The good teaching, extremely well-tailored curriculum and highly personalised care for individual students have combined to produce the college's best ever GCSE results. All students make good progress; the proportion achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or better, including English and mathematics, has risen steeply since the last inspection and, in 2011, was significantly better than the previous national average. Uneven performance at the top grades in recent years has been rigorously addressed and results show a strong upward trend, although the college recognises that there is scope for further development.

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Almost every Ernest Bevin boy leaving compulsory education continues in training, employment or further education, with a rising number now pursuing further study in the college's good and rapidly improving sixth form. A well-developed range of courses ensures that the door is open to boys of all abilities; success rates by the end of Year 13 are high. Success in Year 12 is also improving but less consistent.

Teaching seen during the inspection was predominantly good and some was outstanding. Lessons are characterised by focused, well-ordered learning and high levels of student motivation. There is less evidence, however, of student-led or highly creative approaches to learning. Excellent systems of assessment provide teachers with detailed information about all students, but some variability remains in the extent to which teachers plan materials and activities that are closely matched to the needs of every individual.

Since the last inspection, the college has made striking improvements in examination results, in the development of the sixth form, in raising levels of attendance and in teaching. The Principals and senior team have successfully communicated a passion for learning and achievement that permeates the college. Levels of attainment are high in key areas, such as English and mathematics, and rising across the board. The college's ranking against similar schools nationally has risen dramatically. College leaders evaluate this success unstintingly and plan effectively for each new phase of development, such that the capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of students achieving A and A* grades across all GCSE subjects, by developing teaching that:
 - engages all students more actively in their learning and uses creative approaches to prompt deeper thinking
 - provides opportunities for all students to take greater responsibility for their own learning, by leading aspects of learning and challenging one another in lessons
 - makes more precise use of assessment information to tailor activities, including targeted and searching questioning, to match individual needs more closely.
- Widen the impact of the best sixth form practice so that outcomes are consistently good or better in both Year 12 and Year 13.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Ernest Bevin students are interested, enthusiastic learners who enjoy college. They engage wholeheartedly with the challenging targets they are set. They are consistently able to explain how to improve their work and make good use of marking and personal trackers in their books to help them do so. One boy

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exemplified the culture of determination by explaining that he was assessing his own writing against examination criteria, 'but modestly, because I want to keep challenging myself'.

Boys enter the college with attainment that is broadly average, so their GCSE and sixth form results are indicative of good, often outstanding, achievement. Progress in English and mathematics is consistently good and exceptional for some groups. The college's commitment to equality is evident in the attainment of different groups of students, including those who are at risk of underachievement. The attainment at GCSE of students eligible for free school meals and for those who speak English as an additional language is significantly above average, matching that of their peers. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall; achievement is outstanding for some.

Students experience very little bullying: they know where to go to seek help if they need it and are confident that any concerns will be dealt with effectively. They maintain good standards of behaviour and respond quickly to sanctions or reminders. Rates of exclusion have fallen steadily year on year. Students readily take on responsibilities, acting as mentors to younger boys or providing support to those transferring to secondary school. The college council meets regularly and is active, although not highly influential in matters affecting learning. Students' employability is greatly enhanced by their above average attainment in English and mathematics and confident application of basic skills across the curriculum. They adhere to values of determination, perseverance and teamwork, central to the sports specialism. Their attendance rates have improved year on year and are now high. They demonstrate an ability to reflect and think deeply about moral and cultural issues, such as debating the role of gender in criminality in an English lesson or through a recent exploration of the importance of women's education, the Women Unlimited project, undertaken in collaboration with a girls' school.

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ 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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good, with some that was outstanding. In the best lessons teachers use their strong subject knowledge as a foundation for clear explanations and instructions. They elicit thoughtful and exploratory comments from students with probing questions and push them to think more deeply and explain their answers further. Well-structured group or pair work enables students to articulate their thinking. Teachers make regular checks on understanding and relate the lesson to assessment criteria so that students can evaluate their progress towards target grades.

Teaching is less successful where students are over-reliant on teacher direction and explanation. They respond willingly but their answers are less developed. Because they are interested and motivated, they may still make good progress but the level of challenge and enjoyment is reduced and some, especially the most able, may not explore their full potential in the lesson. Too often a single task or approach for the whole group reduces overall progress and pace.

The outstanding college curriculum is constantly adapted to meet the needs of all students. A wide range of tailored opportunities enables students with different interests and abilities to achieve success. Enrichment activities and qualifications help students develop skills for adult life, such as the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence, or the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) professional qualification in fitness instruction. Progression routes are carefully thought through and regularly reviewed; for example, extension for more-able students, such as the study of Latin. Focus days related to the mathematics and computing specialism, such as on routes into science, technology and engineering, are built into the curriculum offer. After-college activities are extensive and well attended. Adult English and numeracy classes provide outreach opportunities for parents and carers and the wider community.

Students are exceptionally well cared for and guided in their routes through college. This enables them to make the best of the extensive range of opportunities on offer. One parent wrote, 'I feel that Ernest Bevin excels in pastoral care and this to me is paramount in getting the best from our children both academically and socially.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership, stemming from the co-Principals, is clear-sighted, ambitious and inclusive. Middle leaders feel inspired and supported to drive improvement and embark on new initiatives. Staffing is stable and there is deep loyalty to the college, based on trust and a shared desire for success. There is no complacency. The impact of college leaders' actions on past areas of weakness has been exceptional. Monitoring of the quality of teaching has been assiduous; detailed records of strengths and areas for development inform training and development. Subject performance is reviewed regularly resulting in improvements in provision and outcomes.

The governing body is fully involved in subject reviews through a link governor programme. Governors provides effective support and challenge to the college and they ensure that statutory duties are met, including a robust approach to child protection and safeguarding. Parents and carers can meet governors informally at consultation evenings; one way in which the college communicates with parents and carers and keeps them informed. However, several parents and carers felt, and inspectors agreed, that the college could do more to help them support their children's learning or to take account of their concerns.

Partnerships are two-way. Ernest Bevin understands its own value well: it is an innovation school for the Youth Sports Trust; it has supported a school through challenging circumstances; and it has helped other schools develop their practice in safeguarding and child protection. The college embraces opportunities to develop students' understanding of communities beyond their own, such as through the joint curriculum project with a school in China, or by fundraising for earthquake victims in Haiti. A talk by a former student, now a doctor, who had worked in the earthquake zone, lent depth of understanding to this endeavour.

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

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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

Sixth form

The energetic and determined leadership of the sixth form is driving its rapid development. Systems and procedures are well embedded, including rigorous monitoring of students’ progress, accompanied by timely and effective intervention. All systems are regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure ongoing improvements in outcomes. Numbers on roll have risen sharply, as have numbers going on to university. Progress by the end of Year 13 is excellent and attainment, including at the highest grades, is rising as a result. There remains some variation in success between subjects and courses. AS-level results present a more mixed picture than A level, with too many students not achieving a pass grade. Retention from Year 12 to Year 13 is improving quickly.

Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good or better. Students are encouraged to give feedback on the quality of their learning. They reflect on their progress and develop strategies to meet their learning targets. The range of courses available is designed to provide a wide and inclusive offer, so that all students feel very well informed and supported. A striking feature has been the successful integration of a small but growing number of girls who enjoy the culture within the school, and feel entirely at ease and able to succeed. Sixth form students make an active contribution to the life of the school, such as through mentoring, acting as guides to the parents and carers of prospective students and charity fundraising.

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	1

Views of parents and carers

A higher-than-average proportion of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. They were overwhelmingly supportive of the college, although a small

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minority raised concerns with the inspection team, either via the questionnaire or by telephone, which were fully explored with the college. Parents and carers overwhelmingly positive responses are slightly counter-balanced by some concerns about how far they are able to engage with and support learning. A few, for example, would like to be better informed about homework expectations.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ernest Bevin College 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 414 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1275 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	167	40	234	57	11	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	169	41	227	55	13	3	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	199	48	194	47	9	2	5	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	145	35	232	56	18	4	5	1
The teaching is good at this school	162	39	230	56	10	2	3	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	130	31	220	53	37	9	5	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	149	36	228	55	28	7	2	0
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)	154	37	220	53	14	3	5	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	114	28	253	61	23	6	6	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	156	38	211	51	27	7	7	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	94	23	248	60	37	9	6	1
The school is led and managed effectively	141	34	247	60	9	2	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	188	45	205	50	11	3	4	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.

7 October 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Ernest Bevin College, Tooting, London SW17 7DF

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your college recently. We appreciated your willingness to give up time to speak to us and your very courteous and polite attitudes towards us as visitors. You told us how safe you feel at college and how much you appreciate the care and support you are given. You also made clear how highly you value the excellent sporting facilities and opportunities.

We think that your college provides an outstanding quality of education and that the sport specialism plays a major part in making it a special place to learn. The values that underpin great sporting achievement also underpin Ernest Bevin. You are encouraged to aim high; challenging targets are set for you and your teachers expect you to achieve them. More importantly, however, you expect yourselves to achieve them. The improvements you have made over the years in the most vital core aspects of learning are exceptional: your attendance; your attainment in English and mathematics, as well as examination results overall; your readiness for work or the next stage of learning; and the development of your sixth form as a thriving place of study. We congratulate you on all of your achievements.

We enjoyed visiting your lessons and watching how you learn. Teaching is good because you are keen to make progress, concentrate well and respect your teachers' subject knowledge. However, we feel that you could be more involved in your learning and take greater responsibility in the classroom. Your examination results have improved significantly and quickly in recent years, but we think more of you could achieve the very top grades and that Year 12 results need to match the best outcomes of Year 13. We have asked your senior teachers to improve your learning further by ensuring that teachers plan lessons that involve every one of you and provide exciting learning experiences that will stretch and challenge all of you. You can help by sharing responsibility for achieving this goal and by looking for ways to be actively involved in every lesson.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside
Her Majesty's Inspector

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