

Lea Valley High School

Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield, Middlesex, EN3 6TW

Inspection dates 16-17 July 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress, including in science and English and their literacy skills are developed well across different subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good and some of it is outstanding. The best teaching engages all students so that they make significant gains in their learning.
- Students' behaviour is positive in most lessons. The school has effective procedures to maintain punctuality and good attendance.
- Students say they feel safe in school.
- The sixth form is good. The majority of students who follow A level, AS level and work-related courses achieve good results. The majority of students go on to study at university.
- Senior leaders and governors identify where improvement is needed and make sure time and resources are used effectively to bring about improvements, especially in teaching and in students' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in some subjects, including mathematics, is not rapid enough.
- Students are not always given enough written and verbal feedback on how they can improve their work.
- Teachers do not always use questions enough to check how students are doing or to extend their thinking.
- In a small number of lessons teachers plan activities which do not meet the needs of different students and so lack challenge.
- In some lessons the pace of learning slows because teachers talk for too long and do not take enough account of students' ideas.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 49 lessons, of which 23 were observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited tutorial sessions, an assembly and heard a group of students read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and other leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, and four groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information on students’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, including 70 responses on Parent View and staff surveys.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Mary Myatt, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Roger Garrett | Additional Inspector |
| Cliff Mainey | Additional Inspector |
| Rosemary McCarthy | Additional Inspector |
| Alison Pyle | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Lea Valley High School is larger than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is significantly above the national average. This is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and students with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision with London Care Solutions, The Junction and the Raise Programme.
- The school runs a language centre for students who join the school speaking little English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school is a strategic partner in the Enfield Teaching School Alliance. The principal and some senior leaders have provided support for a school in special measures. The principal is a National Leader of Education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding and improve students' achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - consistently using questioning to both check the level of understanding and further challenge students' thinking
 - making sure that verbal and written feedback helps students to be clear about what they have achieved and guides them specifically on how to improve their work
 - making sure that all teachers always plan work which is sufficiently challenging for all students
 - making sure that all teachers give students the opportunity to share their own ideas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with standards that are significantly below average. The progress of the majority of students is good, including in the sixth form, those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- The proportion of students achieving five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics has increased over the last three years and students are on course to continue this trend in 2013.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium reach higher standards at GCSE than the other students in the school. This is as a result of close monitoring and additional programmes for those students who need support. Eligible students achieved half a grade more in English and the same grade in mathematics as other students in 2012. This is higher than for similar students nationally. In English, eligible students achieved similar grades to all students nationally.
- The impressive achievement in English is due to the school's focus on literacy across different subjects, additional reading during tutorial sessions and the use of key technical terms in many lessons. For example, in drama and religious education lessons, students made high quality contributions to discussions about the concepts they were studying.
- Students who benefit from the Year 7 catch-up premium are making good progress because of the targeted support that they receive.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make very good progress. This is as a result of the exceptional support they receive through the school's language centre, which analyses carefully the needs of these students.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The school makes careful arrangements for these students who spoke highly of the support they are given.
- The achievement of students who are not eligible for free school meals has been the focus of additional intervention. The school has provided additional support in lessons, tutorials and after school to make sure they reach their potential. The progress of these students is improving.
- The progress of students in mathematics is below that of students nationally. However, the rates of progress are improving. The school has started additional numeracy lessons at Key Stage 3 and this is having an impact on students' achievement, enjoyment and wider understanding of the importance of mathematics.
- Some students take GCSE mathematics early. The school monitors this carefully and those students who do not make expected progress retake the examination in the summer. This does not limit the potential of the most-able students.
- Students' progress in the sixth form is good, and improving rapidly due to strong leadership.
- In a small minority of subjects, students' achievement is not as positive as it is in most others, and the school has acted swiftly to ensure improvement. There are very high expectations of students who are encouraged to aim high, and many spoke of the high levels of support which teachers give them.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View believe their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good over time because most lessons are planned to build on previous learning and to meet students' different needs. In the best lessons, teachers make sure that students understand the learning objectives and how to be successful. In these lessons, pair and group work is a strong feature and there is high quality dialogue and feedback.
- In some subjects, students are encouraged to learn from each other. In these lessons, teachers'

subject expertise is reflected in well-focused and challenging question-and-answer sessions that extend learning. In some lessons, questioning is used to check learning and to work through misconceptions. There were good examples of this seen in drama, religious education and science.

- Teaching in the language centre is outstanding. High levels of expertise make sure that students arriving at the school speaking little English are quickly and sensitively integrated into the school. Teaching assistants provide good support for students with additional needs.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they are adept at using different approaches to make learning interesting and memorable. For example, in a music lesson, students made outstanding progress because of the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and effective planning which allowed all students to investigate and demonstrate high levels of creativity in developing their own compositions. As a result, some students made more than expected progress.
- When learning is most successful, students work on projects which they say are relevant to them and where they are able to contribute original ideas. In these lessons, there are good relationships between the teacher and students. As a result, students show very good attitudes to learning as they engage with difficult concepts and explore them through high quality discussion. For example, in a science lesson, students were asked to evaluate and discuss one another's ideas about how to improve their answers to examination questions.
- The best features of teaching are not consistent enough in all lessons for teaching to be outstanding. For example, not all teaching is sufficiently challenging for students and not all teachers ask questions that make students think deeply about their learning. There are occasions when the lesson is dominated by the teacher and students do not have sufficient opportunity to share their own ideas. When this happens the pace of learning slows.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for students who need additional support, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress, with some making outstanding progress.
- Some teachers' questioning extends students' thinking and enables them to consolidate their learning but sometimes opportunities are missed. In many lessons, teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question students in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning. Students are given chances to use the skills they have learnt and to work together. Good examples of this were seen in English, physical education and history lessons.
- While many teachers provide helpful verbal and written feedback on what students need to do to improve, this is not applied consistently across the whole school. Where there is high quality feedback, it is accurate and helpful. Written comments provide clear guidance and indicate what students need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour around the school is very positive and attitudes to learning are good. The school has very good strategies for encouraging positive behaviour and respectful relationships. The number of exclusions is slightly lower than national figures for most groups of students.
- Students are aware of how to keep safe and of different forms of bullying. The school works closely with the local police in order to promote safety of students outside school. Considerable effort has been made to make sure that students are aware of e-safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school works well with external agencies to make sure that students with emotional and behavioural difficulties are given the support they need to work successfully with others. The attendance, safety and progress of students who attend college are monitored closely.
- Conversations with students show that they value the school's care for their well-being. They say that when anyone needs additional support with their behaviour, they are sensitively well integrated in lessons. They value opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Sixth formers support younger students both in their studies and in acting as mentors to them.
- Some parents and staff expressed concerns over the school's support for behaviour and safety.

However, most parents who completed Parent View agreed that the school makes sure that students are well behaved and the inspection team confirmed this.

- Attendance is broadly average. The attendance of students who are known to be entitled to free school meals was lower last year than in previous years. This was due to a number of students who had particular health issues.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because the number of permanent exclusions rose slightly in 2013.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal has very high expectations of all students. This is shared by the wider leadership team, including in the sixth form, and many students go on to study at university.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and there are many opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as the levels of reflection and good relationships seen in lessons and tutorials. The school's programme for resolving conflict is outstanding and is highly valued by students.
- The school's 'enrichment pledge' is a commitment to all students that they will have access to extra-curricular activities which will broaden their experiences. As a result every student has the opportunity to attend and participate in an artistic or sporting event, work in a team and help others through voluntary or charity events. Students spoke highly of these opportunities.
- Staff training has focused on making sure that students know how to improve their work. During the inspection, there was good practice in a number of lessons where students responded to teachers' suggestions for improvement. When this happened, students also said that they valued the chance to improve their work. Learning journals are also being used, and there are some good examples of students reflecting on the progress they are making and their attitudes to learning.
- The school has a robust approach to managing the performance of teachers. They are accountable for the progress of the students they teach. They only receive salary increments when they meet their targets.
- The school's checks on its own performance are accurate and it sets itself ambitious targets to secure outstanding practice. It analyses the reasons for any dip in performance and has taken swift action to make sure that students are back on track. For example, the increased focus on numeracy across the curriculum is having an impact on students' progress at Key Stage 3.
- The school has good processes for gathering data on students' attainment and progress. It has also introduced a system for rewarding good behaviour which is valued by students.
- The school makes very good use of pupil premium funding to improve the progress of eligible students. The school has increased time for literacy and provides additional support both for individuals and small groups. These include after-school revision, weekend courses and individual tuition. As a result these students make very good progress.
- There is outstanding leadership of the provision and resourcing for students who arrive at the school speaking English as an additional language.
- The local authority works closely with the school to develop leadership capacity in other schools and in brokering support for other schools.
- The school's commitment to equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination is good. This is a result of extensive opportunities to make sure that students who arrive at the school with standards that are below average or who speak English as an additional language make very good progress.
- The sixth form is very well led and managed. High aspirations, a supportive environment and close monitoring of results mean that students achieve well. Several spoke of their increased ambitions as a result of the opportunities which the school provides for them. Over half the students in the sixth form are following leadership courses; they lead the sporting competitions and activities within the school and local primary schools. Six students are Youth Sports Trust sponsored ambassadors. The number of students who stay on to the second year of their sixth form studies is above average.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body provides outstanding challenge and support for the school's leaders. The chair of the governing body is a National Leader of Governance. It has information about the achievement of different groups of students and the quality of teaching. It analyses these carefully and holds the school to account for improvements. Governors know how well the school compares with other schools nationally and have robust structures in place to make sure that the quality of teaching is linked to salary progression. They keep close checks on how the pupil premium is spent and evaluate the impact of this on the progress of students. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. The governing body oversees efficient financial management of the school's resources and all statutory obligations, including safeguarding for students, are met.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 102050 |
| Local authority | Enfield |
| Inspection number | 413390 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1359 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 234 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Stephen Jakubowski |
| Headteacher | Janet Cullen |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11–12 November 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01992 763666 |
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