

Catford Girls' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100742
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	276375
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2006
Reporting inspector	Adrian Lyons 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Alethea Dougall Ms Susan O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bellingham Road London SE6 2PS
Telephone number	020 8697 8911
Fax number	020 8697 9920

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Catford Girls' School is a business and enterprise college serving a multi-cultural community. It will admit boys to Year 7 from September 2006. A higher proportion of girls join the school after the start of Year 7 than is usual. Many of these pupils come from outside the United Kingdom and fifty languages are spoken by the pupils. Many pupils live in areas with a greater percentage of overcrowded households than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve lesson planning to take account of the needs of all learners particularly the most able;* Improve provision in ICT so that standards are raised and that pupils cover the national curriculum requirements.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

The school considers these are satisfactory but inspectors judge both teaching and learning to be good. Pupils say that teachers are helpful and they enjoy learning. In the best lessons teachers' excellent subject knowledge, high expectations, pace, and energy, interests and inspires pupils to learn and achieve well. Teachers go that extra mile to provide revision classes and there is good examination preparation in lessons. Paired and group work help pupils' personal development as well as being useful for the many girls with English as an additional language. In most lessons objectives are clear, behaviour is good and very good use is made of interactive white boards to enliven learning. Girls are praised and new vocabulary is introduced very clearly. However, lessons are not always matched to the needs of all the pupils, particularly more able girls who are not challenged enough. Sometimes less able pupils are given work that is too difficult to read. Although marking often sets out how pupils' work can be improved, this is not consistent across the school. Homework is not set regularly enough. Support staff do a good job in class, working with individuals with special needs or whose English is at an early stage, or by modifying lesson materials.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

Although the school rates its curriculum as good inspectors found that it was satisfactory. The school provides pupils in Years 7-9 with the full range of national curriculum subjects. A small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 take the opportunity to follow vocational courses at the local college. The school also offers everyone a good choice which enables pupils to achieve well in groups of subjects they enjoy. There is a good range of vocational courses ranging from popular business courses to manufacturing where take up has so far been disappointing. A good range of optional activities are provided and groups of pupils have been very successful in enterprise related competitions and have been commended for professional quality presentations. Enterprise weeks involve all pupils in an interesting range of activities. There are many good business, enterprise and work related learning activities taking place and subjects have been surveyed to identify how they contribute. However these activities do not contribute to a coherent programme ensuring that all aspects of economic understanding and work related

learning are covered. What stops the curriculum from being 'good' is that ICT is not taught to all pupils in Years 10 and 11 and this lack of provision builds on a legacy of ICT underachievement in Years 7 to 9.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

This is good. It has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and progress. Policies and procedures for pupils' safety are effective. All new staff have criminal record checks and staff are trained well in child protection. Site security is good. Pupils feel safe. The girls appreciate the care the school provides but they are right that the toilets are unacceptable. Catford Girls' welcomes new pupils, whether they are in Year 7 or arrive part way through the year. Staff and older girls deal with any bullying so that the atmosphere in school is friendly and unthreatening. Most areas of the school are accessible to wheelchair users. There are fifty different languages spoken. The English as an additional language department assesses and supports pupils well so that they make good progress. All staff contribute to regular reviews. There is very good information on pupils with additional needs to help teachers plan lessons. Confidential records are kept on those girls living in challenging circumstances. Links with outside agencies are very good but parents are not sufficiently involved in school life. The pastoral system is strong: tutors and heads of year look after academic as well as personal development, setting targets and tracking pupils' progress. Pupils know their targets and how to achieve them. All pupils learn about sexual health, and about alcohol and drug abuse. Finance lessons prepare Year 11 pupils well for moving on but careers education does not give pupils enough flavour of specific careers, particularly in business and enterprise.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you our findings.

First of all, I would like to thank you all for welcoming us to your school, for talking to us about your experiences in school and for letting us see your work. As a result of our inspection, we have found that yours is a good school. The best features of the school are: * The way the headteacher and staff have worked hard to raise examination results and helped each of you to achieve as well as you can; * The standards of behaviour when we were in school; * The friendly and caring atmosphere we found in the school; * The way the school helps pupils from different backgrounds and who speak different languages to mix together and learn well.

We know that while most of you and your parents are very happy with the school there are still things that could be better and your headteacher and teachers understand this too. To become an even better school it needs to: * Ensure that in all of your lessons the work that is set is at the right level of difficulty for each of you; * Ensure that you are all taught to use information and communication technology (ICT) in all years - this is a requirement of the National Curriculum. You were right to tell us about the toilets. We have told the school that we agree with you that these must be improved. Perhaps the school council could suggest ways to keep them pleasant.