



East Barnet School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101351
Local Authority Barnet
Inspection number 286040
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Asyia Kazmi HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Chestnut Grove
School category	Community		East Barnet
Age range of pupils	11–18		Barnet EN4 8PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8440 4162
Number on roll (school)	1241	Fax number	020 8449 9862
Number on roll (6th form)	246		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Jonathan Hewlings
		Headteacher	Mr Nick Christou
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	6–7 February 2007	286040

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

East Barnet is a larger than average secondary school. It is popular and over-subscribed. There are more boys in the school than girls. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is low, however, this is increasing. The attainment of students when they start school is in line with national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Students come from a range of minority ethnic heritages and a greater than usual number of students speak English as an additional language. Student mobility in and out of school is low.

The school acquired technology college status in 2005 and it is a National Support School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'A first rate school' is how a parent described East Barnet school and inspectors agree. In this outstanding school, the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by a highly effective senior leadership team and governors, ensures that students take great pride in their efforts and achievements. They receive an excellent education and embody the school aim 'I want to learn' through their positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour.

The enactment of the school's vision to ensure that every child really matters, results in outstanding spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the students. This is demonstrated through the care that students show for each other, their excellent relationships with staff, enjoyment of learning in lessons and their enthusiastic involvement in the life of the school.

The senior leaders, along with the middle managers, have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and robust. Regular monitoring of performance means they are able to take swift action to remedy shortcomings. Students enter the school with average attainment; as a result of good teaching they make very good progress so by the time they leave the school in the sixth form they have achieved high standards.

This is an inclusive school, it puts the needs of students' first at all times. The high proportion of students who stay on in the sixth form and go on to further education are a testament to the success of the school's commitment to providing the best opportunities to all.

The impact of the school's specialist status is seen in the improving standards, the enhanced curriculum and the use of technology by teachers for assessment and e-learning. The curriculum provision has enabled students to enjoy wide ranging and creative learning opportunities, whilst those who need it are accessing additional literacy and numeracy support delivered by senior teachers. The planned new building will enable the school to overcome the current constraints posed by the inadequate accommodation and a split site. Despite this the school has created an environment where students feel valued, their achievements celebrated and a culture of learning established. As a parent put it 'there is a warmth about the school'.

Students enjoy a wide variety of activities and have many opportunities to contribute to the life of their school through the student leadership group, student council mentoring and as a governor on the governing body. A parent told inspectors 'our son has been taught to be self motivated and independent'.

The school has developed a range of initiatives to improve teaching and learning including an exciting cross-curricular programme that is putting the 'wow back into learning'. The school is generous with its time and resources, teachers share their expertise with local schools. In addition, the school has achieved National Support School status that will enable it to help other schools to improve.

Very effective systems are in place for performance management. Teachers take up opportunities to run projects aimed at raising achievement. Strategies to share effective practices are increasingly well embedded. As a result teaching is good, with some outstanding practice. The school recognises that in order to improve all teaching to the level of the best, assessment information needs to be consistently used for planning lessons. Many parents commented on the enthusiasm, energy and motivation of the staff. A parent reported 'all the staff have demonstrated real enthusiasm for their subject and the progress of their children'.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is outstanding. In 2006, the achievements of student in A levels were in the top 10% of schools in the country. Standards are above average overall. Students make excellent progress due to outstanding teaching, particularly in A level subjects. Progress is good in vocational subjects. Teachers know their subjects very well and have excellent relationships with students, encouraging them to do their best at all times.

Good curriculum provision is based on a wide choice of advanced courses but there is limited choice of intermediate level vocational courses due to the inadequate accommodation. Students noted that in the sixth form, 'The atmosphere is great and we like all the teachers!' Students make a significant contribution to the school community; they act as good role models for younger students and acknowledge their pride in belonging to the school by joining the student leadership team and the school design team. They very much enjoy their time in the sixth form; this is reflected in the very high retention rates to courses.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information consistently to better match teaching to the learning needs of all students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Standards continue to improve, they rose significantly in 2006 and are now good. Students start school with standards in line with national average, they make good progress so by the end of Year 9 standards are above national averages. This progress is maintained through to Year 11 so when they take GCSE examination they achieve standards above the national average.

Standards are particularly high in English, mathematics, drama and music. The school has identified that standards at the end of Year 11 are not as high in information and communication technology (ICT), German and Spanish. The school monitors progress rigorously and has an accurate picture of where students are underperforming. This

helps to ensure students are supported in meeting the challenging targets set for them. The school works hard to engage disaffected students in education; as a result the progress made by these students and students with learning difficulties and disabilities is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students are very helpful and courteous. Their behaviour, in and out of lessons, is exemplary. They enjoy their education greatly and feel very safe and secure. The school draws on a range of services to ensure the well-being of students such as an art therapist and a Safer Schools Officer.

Students have a strong voice and are influential in the school, they are listened to and action often ensues. The student design team is fully involved with staff working on the initial stages of the development of the new school building. Many students are active members of the borough music centre and the local Chicken Shed Theatre Company.

Students discuss moral issues with clarity and sensitivity; they show great respect and care for each other and the wider community. Many students have been trained to act as peer listeners and some work with the school counsellor as 'befrienders' to provide support for students finding school life difficult. All students are very well prepared for life beyond school and for their wider role as citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 11 with examples of very good practice. It is outstanding in the sixth form where students are enthused by dynamic and exhilarating teaching. Year 11 students say 'Teachers are more like friends than being in charge of you, they give us respect'. The school successfully nurtures a culture where students learn how to learn. They then apply this skill across subjects. A notable strength is the strong subject knowledge that teachers have.

The best learning takes place in lessons that challenge students of different abilities. In these lessons good support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities pays dividends by students making good progress. Not all lessons do this effectively because, although prior information about students' progress is meticulously tracked and analysed, it is not consistently used to inform daily lesson planning. Marking is constructive and consistent.

Through astute monitoring by senior managers teaching and learning are being strengthened. The school is spearheading its own coaching initiative to share the very best practice that already exists.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding, it offers flexible academic and vocational subject choice which allows all students to progress and achieve well. It is responsive to the needs of students and parents. The emphasis on technology in the school reflects the school's specialist status; the good choice of vocational subjects includes excellent provision for engineering and construction. A strong partnership with the local college allows students to access a wider range of courses.

Students in Years 7 and 8 follow an innovative 'Triple-E' curriculum, aimed at enhancing, enriching and extending their learning. ICT is being developed well across the curriculum as a tool for learning, inspectors observed expert use by students. Participation rates in the wide range of extra-curricular activities is high, students are increasingly able to develop their talents, particularly in technology, music and languages. Provision for personal, social and health education includes citizenship and effectively prepares students for their role as responsible young adults.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

A parent told inspectors 'the pastoral care is outstanding'; inspectors agree that the care, guidance and support provided to students are, indeed, outstanding. Senior leaders have excellent links with external agencies to support individual students' needs. This together with a close working relationship with parents provides a strong pastoral support network which ensures that all students, including the most vulnerable, receive outstanding advice and guidance.

Academic tutors monitor progress effectively and provide good guidance. An informed and well organised system of induction and links with primary schools ensures that there is an excellent start for all pupils. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are identified early and have good support in most lessons. Gifted and talented students have opportunities to extend their learning in creative ways.

Students receive excellent careers advice. Procedures for ensuring students' safety and welfare including child protection are very good. In the sixth form this high quality of guidance is further developed and the provision of both academic and careers guidance is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and his senior team provide visionary leadership that drives continuous improvement which extends into the wider educational community. Their success is evident in the rising standards and achievement of the students. They have created a culture where staff at all levels are clearly focused on promoting the well being and academic development of students. The effective leadership of subjects and pastoral teams is having a positive impact on students' learning and development in all aspects. This is a school where leadership is developed at all levels, including students.

Middle managers are strong, they have benefited from regular opportunities to train and learn from each others' best practice. They are rigorous and accurate in their self evaluation, which in turn informs the whole school development plan. This helps the school to focus and take collective action on the right priorities. Hence the school's capacity for improvement is outstanding.

Governors understand their role and responsibilities and ably support and challenge the school. The school is highly regarded by an overwhelming majority of parents and the local community.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us. We valued the discussions we had with you and I would like to take this opportunity to share our findings with you.

Your school is an outstanding school; you work hard in your lessons and are very supportive of each other. We were particularly impressed with your exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. The teaching in your school is good; your school helps you to enjoy your learning by providing you with a wide range of courses and exciting learning opportunities such as the Triple-E school. We think the way the school supports and guides you is excellent, your teachers set challenging targets for you and help you meet them. In the sixth form nearly all students finish their courses and achieve outstanding results. There are many opportunities for you to participate in the life of the school such as the design team and school orchestras, your work here was impressive.

The headteacher, senior teachers and teachers work hard to ensure you succeed and achieve in many ways, they care about your wellbeing as well as your academic success. The way they check your progress is very good. To build on the successes so far we have asked that your school uses assessment information consistently to better match teaching to the learning needs of all students.

We are pleased that you will soon have a new building where you will have even better opportunities. We wish you and your school every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Asyia Kazmi

Her Majesty's Inspector