



# Lea Valley High School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 102050  
**Local Authority** Enfield  
**Inspection number** 286264  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Wiola Hola HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Bullsmoor Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Enfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19		EN3 6TW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01992763666
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1125	<b>Fax number</b>	01992760152
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	120		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sheila Grayston
		<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Janet Cullen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–19	22–23 November 2006	286264

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The school is average in size. Students come from a very wide range of backgrounds with sixty per cent from minority ethnic groups. Just over half of the students have a first language other than English, 58 of whom are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Asylum seekers account for fifteen per cent of students. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The proportion joining the school other than at the usual times is higher than average. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is well above average. Attainment on entry is below average overall. The school was designated as a specialist sports college in September 2002. In its redesignation bid, the school has selected mathematics as an additional subject. The school has a 12-place unit for students with speech or communication difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is an improving school where standards are rising. Leadership and management are good. The drive and dedication of the principal and her team of teachers and support staff are clearly visible. The school provides a satisfactory education with some strengths. It is particularly effective in creating a climate where every student is included and encouraged, with added specific support where necessary. Students are positive about the school and enjoy their learning. Many speak highly of the school's facilities in the new building and how many aspects of the school have improved in recent years. They cite provision for sports in particular and this is indeed exceptional. Students are polite and friendly. They are well behaved in the main and show respect to each other, staff and visitors. Their personal development is good.

Standards are below average but improving. They are broadly average in the sixth form. Achievement is satisfactory overall, both in the main school and in the sixth form. Students achieve well in some areas, but there has been underachievement in science, for some more able students and for some with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school is addressing areas of relative weakness and there are signs of improvement, particularly in science. The school's good work on strengthening assessment procedures is contributing to raising standards. Teaching and learning are varied with examples of good and excellent practice; they are satisfactory overall. One of the school's strengths is in training and developing staff. In response to a teacher shortage a few years ago, the school worked, and is working, with determination to recruit and train teachers. Teachers, new and established, show enthusiasm for their work. The extent to which teachers provide students with challenging and engaging tasks is variable. Some teachers are skilful in their questioning techniques. Teachers' use of computers in the classroom is good and adds to interest in learning.

The curriculum is good. It includes some new and innovative features for students in Years 10 to 13 through which they can opt for courses to suit their needs and abilities, and sustain motivation. Many staff are involved in caring for and supporting students effectively over personal and academic issues. They work in effective partnership with each other and outside agencies. Much attention is given to ensuring good behaviour and attendance and these have improved in recent years. Academic guidance is generally good but inconsistencies exist in the extent to which students are helped to understand their own progress and how to improve their work.

The school's processes for keeping its work under review and planning for improvement are strong. Senior leaders, governors and staff at many levels are determined and uncompromising about raising standards. Occasionally, managers' evaluation of students' achievement lacks precision or incisive questioning. Raised standards and other changes and innovations demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form is satisfactory overall with good leadership. An innovative curriculum enables students from a wide ability range to access suitable courses, well matched to their needs and aspirations. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and students' achievements are broadly average. Although some students achieve well there is also some underachievement, particularly in AS examinations. The school's relatively new systems for checking students' progress are effective in identifying underachievement and triggering intervention but have yet to show a full impact upon raising standards. Good care, guidance and support for students', along with the new curriculum, have greatly improved attendance and punctuality. Students make a significant contribution to the main school through their roles as prefects, mentors and as role models to the younger students. They also have other leadership opportunities, in fund raising for charities, working with senior citizens and as junior sports leaders who help in local primary schools for example. Students' contributions to the school and wider community are good and are raising the profile of the sixth form within the school and beyond. Recruitment into the sixth form is rising.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Eliminate any remaining areas of underachievement, particularly in science, and amongst some of the more able students and those with learning difficulties or disabilities.
- Increase the amount of good teaching; ensure all tasks are matched well to students' needs; improve teachers' questioning skills to challenge students to think more deeply.
- Strengthen some managers' skills in evaluating students' achievements as part of the strategy to raise standards further.
- Increase the consistency with which students understand their own targets for learning and how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory overall. Whilst achievement is good in places, there are pockets of underachievement. The school is acting swiftly to address those in science with visible signs of improvement in this subject.

The 2006 results in the Year 9 national tests improved significantly from the well below average results of 2005. The 2006 results show that students made good progress overall but with underachievement in science and for some more able students. The GCSE results have also gone up and show that students made satisfactory progress from Year 7 and good progress from Year 9. These improvements are testimony to the school's concerted efforts to raise standards through improved assessment procedures

and other means. Examination results in the sixth form were average overall in 2005 but dipped in 2006.

The progress of students who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. This is also generally true for students with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those in the special unit, but some make limited progress mainly because the school does not always have high enough expectations of them. In the main, however, target setting includes suitable challenge. Students speak very positively about what they enjoy and gain in some subjects: in particular, they mention physical education, performing and creative arts, French and Spanish, English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development and well being are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. These are strengths of the school. Students are polite and courteous; they work co-operatively with each other. Attitudes and behaviour are good: students state that behaviour in the school has improved. In a few lessons, low level disruption impedes learning or some students' efforts are quietly minimal. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory.

Students contribute well to the school's caring and supportive community. Older students look after younger ones, for example. Students are confident when talking to adults. They speak extremely positively about the school and feel that it is a place where they feel safe and supported. They know where to find help if they have a concern. They are confident that bullying is dealt with by the school and, moreover, they say they would attempt to stop bullying if they saw it happening. The sixth form prefects have a very positive impact in school.

Students have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe: the school's status as a specialist sports college contributes well to this. Students have many good personal skills for future work and employment but their skills in literacy and numeracy are a relative weakness.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features. Sometimes they are excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and positive relationships with students so that students feel free to ask questions and seek help which aids their progress.

Good lessons include high expectations of students, effective use of resources, including ICT, and questioning that challenges students' thinking. Students' progress and understanding are sometimes very good because teachers demonstrate ideas and concepts clearly and engagingly or make effective use of students' own experiences. Examples exist of students receiving useful written or verbal feedback about their work and how to improve. The school is aware of where such good practice exists and is taking steps to share this and other good aspects more widely.

In some lessons, the range of teaching styles is limited and students' concentration and effort is not fully maintained. There are missed opportunities for group and paired work, for example, and teachers do not routinely require students to give extended answers to questions. Teachers receive good quality data about students' prior learning but this is not always used to plan lessons that cater for the needs of all pupils. Support staff are deployed well and are effective.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum is good and contributes well to students' personal development.

The curriculum for students in Years 10 to 13 is innovative: students may choose from a number of learning pathways that build on their prior attainment and meet their needs and interests. The curriculum includes a good range of GCSE subjects including applied and vocational courses. The range of A-level courses is adequate, as is the provision of subjects for students in Years 7 to 9. In Years 7 to 9, the lower attaining students generally receive appropriate additional support but some of the more able are not always suitably challenged. The courses in Years 10 to 13 reflect the school's inclusive aims and are popular with students, including some who have previously been disaffected but whose motivation has been increased. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection.

Students have opportunities to develop their leadership skills through courses such as sports leadership award. Many participate and enjoy the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available at lunch time and after school. Visits to colleges, universities and places of work are raising expectations of what students can achieve in the world beyond school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Good procedures are in place to ensure students' welfare, health and safety. Child protection procedures are followed rigorously and all staff have received recent training. The appointment of student welfare coordinators in all year groups is making a significant contribution to improving attendance, removing barriers to learning and providing personal support for all students. The sixth

form student prefect system provides another layer of support to younger students in the school.

Parents praise the good support given to the more vulnerable students in particular. The school works in effective partnership with outside agencies where necessary to ensure students' good behaviour, maximum attendance and engagement in learning. The flexible programme for a small group of disaffected students is reducing exclusions and is being carefully monitored for educational impact. Students receive good guidance about career and option choices through a well-planned and coordinated programme. The school librarian contributes greatly to this and is highly regarded.

Many students know their target grades and the level they are working at but others are not sure about these or what specifically they need to do to improve. The 'traffic light' system is used well in places to check on students' progress but this is not yet applied consistently throughout the school.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The principal has built an effective team of senior and middle tier leaders who provide clear direction to the rest of the school. The school's systems for self-evaluation have recently been reviewed and are rigorous; staff are held to account for their students' performance. The outcome is an accurate self-assessment that has given rise to well formed plans and strategies for further school improvement. Several new initiatives, such as those for assessing students' achievements, have yet to be fully implemented and checked for effectiveness. Students' achievement is kept closely under review by senior staff. Some middle managers have yet to develop their skills fully in relation to the rigorous analysis of students' performance data and the checking of progress. Systems and procedures around the school, such as those for behaviour management, are robust and are generally applied well. Staff support each other.

The school has good strategies for recruiting and training its own staff and this has helped it to become fully staffed and to maintain stability. The governing body is effective, acting as a critical friend to the school as well as challenging senior staff to raise standards. The school has recently had a major rebuild and this, along with a range of other initiatives and improvements has raised the profile of the school in the local community. The school uses its financial resources well and, in view of students' satisfactory achievements overall, it provides satisfactory value for money. Through its status as a specialist sports college it has many good links to local primary and special schools, as well as sports clubs. Facilities are excellent and are used and maintained well.



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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	3	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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

I write to thank you for your welcome when a team of inspectors visited recently and also to tell you about our findings. We appreciate the help many of you gave us by talking about your work and sharing your views. You clearly enjoy being at this school which provides a satisfactory quality of education overall. The school enables you to develop into mature and confident young people.

These are the best features about your school:

- You have good attitudes to work, behave well in the main, and show respect to each other, staff and visitors.
- Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many lessons are good and occasionally they are excellent.
- The school's status as a specialist sports college is having a positive impact in many ways.
- Students aged 14 to 19 have a good choice of learning pathways in the different types of courses offered and at different levels.
- You receive good care and support from teachers and other support staff such as the librarian, teaching assistants and the student welfare coordinators.
- You enjoy your learning, particularly in physical education, performing and creative arts, French and Spanish, English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Governors and senior staff are very clear about what the school does well and how it can improve. They lead and manage the school well.

We have highlighted the following as being the most important areas for improvement, so that you all achieve your best. The school now needs to:

- Check that your progress in science is now at least satisfactory. Keep a closer check on the progress of some of the most and least able students.
- Make more lessons as good as the best. Make sure that the tasks you get in lessons are suitably challenging. Develop some teachers' skills in asking you searching questions so that you think and answer more deeply.
- Train some teachers to make better use of statistics about your progress.
- Make sure that you all know your own targets for learning and how to improve your work; you all have a part to play here in understanding these things and acting upon them.

We wish you all the very best for your own futures and for the future of the school.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Wiola Hola

Her Majesty's Inspector