



Gaynes School Language College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102344
Local Authority Havering
Inspection number 286348
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
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 address	Brackendale Gardens
School category	Community		Upminster
Age range of pupils	11–16		RM14 3UX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01708 502900
Number on roll (school)	939	Fax number	01708 502901
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Mick Pullin
		Headteacher	Mr Russell Ayling
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2002		

Age group 11–16	Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007	Inspection number 286348
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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

Gaynes School Language College is a slightly smaller than average secondary school on the borders of outer London and Essex. Students come to the school from a wide range of primary schools. Most students are White British and there are noticeably more boys than girls. The proportions of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, from minority ethnic backgrounds, whose first language is not English or who are eligible for free school meals are all well below 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: 2

This is a good and improving school. Inspectors agree with the school's accurate self evaluation. A charismatic headteacher leads a committed senior leadership team. The involvement of middle leaders in self evaluation is innovative and effective. The successful way in which the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed, together with ongoing innovation and rising standards provide ample evidence of the good capacity to improve.

The curriculum is outstanding as are the school's links with other organisations in contributing to the education, standards and care of its students. The school takes its specialist language role very seriously with high quality outreach to other schools. The curriculum combines a strong emphasis on the study of modern languages with a range of vocational courses that meet both the interest and ability of all students. This curriculum is helping to raise standards.

Students enter the school with standards that are broadly average and by the end of Year 11 have GCSE scores that are above average. Particularly impressive is the proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes at high levels including English, mathematics and a modern foreign language. Where the performance of a particular subject has been relatively weaker, leaders investigate the reasons and take robust action to bring about improvement. This has led to rising standards in science and a transformation in modern foreign languages. The good achievement of students is despite the appalling accommodation.

While teaching and learning are good overall, it could be even better. For example, while through work related learning and vocational options, students are prepared well for adult life, in many subjects there are too few opportunities for students to work together in groups or teams.

The school has a lot of data for tracking the progress of students. The information has not been used effectively enough to identify and monitor students who are gifted and talented or have learning difficulties and disabilities. However, last year's increases in A* grades at GCSE demonstrate that there is increasing challenge for the most able. The school fails to fulfil its legal duty to provide a daily corporate act of worship.

The overwhelming majority of parents are very happy with the school. A typical comment was, 'I am very pleased with my daughter's progress. She is achieving her full potential and is proud of being a part of the school'. However, a few parents have concerns about behaviour or more specific individual criticisms. Students are very supportive of the school and clearly enjoy being there.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use data more effectively to further raise achievement for all students and especially the most and least able
- Increase the range of classroom activities so that students develop a wider range of personal skills required for adult life.

- Meet statutory requirements by providing a daily act of collective worship.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Students enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment and make good progress. In the 2005 national tests standards in mathematics and English were above average. Since then the school has addressed the relative underachievement in science and standards at the end of Year 9 are now above average. Teachers' assessments show that students reach exceptionally high standards in modern foreign languages by the end of Year 9. In Year 11 the proportion of students who obtained grades A* - C in five GCSE subjects was above the national average in the 2005 examinations, and increased further last year. In 2006 the percentage of students whose five A* - C grades included mathematics and English was well above the national average. The school's specialist status is reflected well in the very high standards achieved in modern foreign languages. For example, in 2005 all students who were entered for German obtained at least a 'C' grade. More than half of Year 11 students obtain at least five passes at A* - C which include English, mathematics, and a modern foreign language.

In many subjects, including mathematics and English literature the 2005 results show that the number of students who obtained the highest grades (A* and A) was below average. The school has taken steps to give more support to the most able students and the 2006 results show that they are beginning to bear fruit. Students who have learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because of the curriculum on offer.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well being of students are good. They enjoy coming to school and are motivated by rewards for their achievements. Many students enjoy taking part in the wide-ranging sports programme. They choose healthy options in the canteen. Behaviour is good and students feel safe in school. The small number of disruptive students who risk exclusion receive good support enabling them to re-join their classes. There is occasional bullying but students report that this is dealt with quickly and effectively. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Plans are in place that aim to improve attendance further.

Year 11 prefects support other students well. They also have a valuable public relations role in the local community. There is potential to extend the role of the school council. Members were able to discuss their participation in senior appointments and have instigated changes to uniform. However they are not yet involved in improving teaching and learning or the curriculum. Students raise substantial funds for good causes. They develop a very good range of skills to support their future economic well being, for example, through an extensive vocational education programme, and high achievement in English, mathematics and ICT. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are

good. The many visits that students attend significantly extend their personal and social skills. There are good opportunities for meditation and reflection in religious education, but insufficient time for reflection in form time and assemblies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Students make good progress and learn effectively because lessons are well matched to their needs. Teachers make clear to students at the start of lessons what they will be learning and give good opportunities for students to check that the objectives have been met. Students say that teachers make the lessons interesting. New resources such as inter-active whiteboards hold students' attention well and help to enliven teaching. For example, in a French lesson the students enjoyed a good variety of challenging memory games.

In most lessons, behaviour is good because students are set appropriately challenging and varied tasks. There is a good blend of direct instruction and individual work although opportunities for students to develop their personal skills through paired and group work are more limited. Teachers' explanations ensure students have a good understanding of what they need to do to reach higher levels in their work. Marking is good and gives effective feedback on strengths and makes clear how to improve. Teaching assistants make an important contribution in class and support students with learning difficulties and disabilities effectively.

To improve teaching and learning still further, students need more opportunities to work together and challenge one another. Assessment information needs to be used by subjects to identify and consistently challenge the most able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

There is an outstanding curriculum which meets all statutory requirements. All students study a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11, most study two whilst some study three. Modern language skills contribute well to literacy development across the school.

All students in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to take vocational options as a result of the extended range of provision made possible by the partnership with the borough's two colleges. Many students have clear career aspirations that account for their choice of subject, for example students on level one hair and beauty course wanting to work in hair salons. The range of vocational courses exceeds that offered by most schools. For example courses are offered at level one, such as motor vehicle studies, and level two, for example engineering. The school is exploring possibilities for offering courses at level 3 (A level equivalent) and so the opportunities for every child to pursue courses appropriate to their interest and abilities is at the heart of curriculum planning.

The school makes every effort to accommodate the requests of students for GCSE courses. Students are able to join community language classes after school such as Japanese. Other students take the full GCSE in religious education as an after school extension to the short course taken by all students. Students from several year groups have embarked on a GCSE music course after school. Many students are involved in extra curricular activities especially in sport.

Taken together, the opportunities for language study, the vocational provision together with a well thought out and planned work related learning programme and the extra curricular activities have a significantly positive impact on students' personal development and well-being. They also provide exceptional opportunities for students of all abilities to achieve worthwhile qualifications.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of students are good. An external audit confirms high standards of health and safety. Child protection procedures are well established and meet current government requirements. Students in Year 7 are very well supported into a welcoming school. They very much appreciate the help they get from Year 11 students. Very good pastoral support and careers education continues throughout the students' time in school. Through their recent involvement in teaching the new Personal Professional Student Development programme, form tutors are now well informed on how to report on individual progress on academic review days. The school links with a very wide range of external support agencies to ensure that individuals receive appropriate support. There are clear and effective procedures for managing disruptive behaviour. For example, for the small number of students whose behaviour puts them at risk of exclusion, there is a very successful Pastoral Support Centre to help them re-engage with school life.

While overall care, guidance and support are good, it could be even better. There is too little reference on teachers' lesson plans to the targets for students with learning difficulties. Teaching assistants provide very good support in lessons but systems to assess the progress of the students they support are too informal. There is a developing programme of enrichment activities for gifted and able students. However, there is insufficient focus by subjects on ensuring that they are appropriately challenged in every lesson. The use of assessment information to track students' progress, for example those with learning difficulties, lacks sufficient rigour to identify, at an early stage, those students who may not reach their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has good leadership and management. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction which focuses on raising standards and achievement. He is well supported by an effective leadership team. Together they have developed a strong culture of self-evaluation which has been shared with subject managers and individual

teaching staff. Recent initiatives in science have been instrumental in raising standards. Both senior and middle managers are acutely aware of the key areas for improvement. Procedures for the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning are well established and the evaluations are accurate.

Professional development of staff is given high priority and is closely linked to the outcomes of performance management. The school is inclusive and leaders successfully promote equality of opportunity and the personal development of students while ensuring good care and guidance. They constantly review and adapt the curriculum and they work closely with external agencies to this end. For example, the school has enhanced its opportunities for vocational education. Management and co-ordination of this provision are outstanding.

The school's success as a specialist language college has contributed to high standards, and opportunities to share best practice and expertise in this field. Governors make a significant contribution to the success of the school by strongly supporting and challenging senior managers. These considerable strengths provide the school with good capacity to build on its success and improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

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, for talking to us about your experiences in school and for letting us see your work. It was good to have lunch with members of the school council. As a result of our inspection, we have found that yours is a good and improving 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 well
- the curriculum that equips you well for adult life through its emphasis on modern foreign languages and the vocational options
- the standards of behaviour and the responsible and mature attitudes of many students, especially prefects and members of the school council
- the way you are cared for in school
- the links that the school has made with local colleges and a wide range of organisations to support your education and care

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:

- use assessment information better to check even more carefully on the progress of each of you
- increase the range of classroom activities so that you develop an even wider range of personal skills required for adult life such as team work
- meet legal requirements for a daily act of worship by providing more opportunities for you to pause and reflect.

The school would appreciate your ideas on how it could be even better. Perhaps you could support your school council better by making suggestions to them.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons, Her Majesty's Inspector.