



Ellis Guilford School and Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122828
Local Authority CITY OF NOTTINGHAM
Inspection number 292521
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector David Simpson HMI

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 address | Bar Lane |
| School category | Community | | Basford, Basford |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 | | Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG6 0HT |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01159131338 |
| Number on roll (school) | 1259 | Fax number | 01159131341 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr M Archer |
| | | Headteacher | Mr P Plummer |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 October 2001 | | |

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| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
| 11–16 | 4–5 October 2006 | 292521 |

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Ellis Guilford School and Sports College is a larger than average secondary school which is continuing to grow. Approximately a fifth of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportions of students eligible for free school meals or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well above the national average. As a result of sports college status the school's sporting facilities have been significantly improved and these are used extensively by the local community in the evenings and weekends.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ellis Guilford School and Sports College provides a good education for its students and the local community. The school ensures that students are successfully introduced to the demands of secondary education and that a very high proportion move on to further education, training or employment. Students enter the school with standards which are well below national averages. The school understands the needs of its students well. It provides a distinctive, excellent curriculum which motivates the students and meets their personal abilities and interests. Although standards in GCSE results are below the national averages, the proportion of students who attain five or more higher GCSE grades is rising and the school ensures that almost all students leave with suitable qualifications. Given their starting points, students make good progress by the time they leave at the end of Year 11. Not all students are consistently making good progress and this is particularly the case in Years 7 to 9. This is due primarily to the quality of teaching which is too uneven. Much is good, providing students with challenge, well paced activities and opportunities to reflect on their performance and the performance of others. However, in a minority of lessons too little account is taken of what the students have already learnt, work is not well matched to their needs and teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to show what they know or can do for themselves. There is a very strong sense of common purpose which runs throughout Ellis Guilford based around the individual student, their welfare and preparing them for adult life. This feature reflects the strong leadership from the headteacher. He makes principled decisions based on what best serves his community. For example, he has been careful to introduce a wide and varied range of vocational courses but all have clear routes into further education, training or employment. The senior leadership team share his goals and work well in teams to carry forward initiatives and look after the school community. In particular, the two deputy headteachers play an important role in leading school improvement. The school has effective procedures to evaluate its work and set accurate priorities for future development. However, in some instances the planned outcomes are not precise enough and so do not help the school to measure the impact of its work, particularly with regard to improving the consistency of teaching in order to improve students' progress. Thorough systems of care, guidance and support are in place and adults respond sympathetically to the needs of individual students. Consequently relationships throughout the school are characterised by mutual respect and a readiness to listen and understand one another's point of view. Student conduct is well managed and instances of immature or reckless behaviour are rare. The students are polite, welcoming and feel valued. As they progress through the school, students have increasing opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, they attend governors' meetings. Good and extensive links with other agencies and local businesses help the school to support their students, especially those who are most at risk of becoming disaffected or disengaged from their education. Sports college status has had a very positive impact on the school and the local community. Students experience a wide range of sporting activities and take on leadership roles. They are helped to settle into Year 7 through an effective programme of lessons on healthy and active lifestyles which supports their learning across the

curriculum. Ellis Guilford has a good capacity to improve further. It is a thriving and popular school which continues to be ambitious for its students, for its staff and the wider community.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that students make consistently good progress, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Improve the proportion of lessons which are good or better, by planning more lessons carefully so that activities meet the needs of individual students and provide plenty of opportunities for them to learn actively.
- Refine the use of data and monitoring currently in operation to further raise expectations and measure the impact of the school's strategies to improve achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Overall students make good progress in their time at the school. On entry students' standards of literacy and numeracy are particularly weak. In Years 7 to 9 students' progress is satisfactory. Achievement then accelerates as a consequence of the stimulating curriculum, which meets students' personal needs and aspirations, and the more challenging teaching they receive. Attainment is below national averages both in the end of Key Stage 3 national tests and in GCSE examinations or equivalent qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4. However, there is a steady trend of improvement in standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 9. More able students do well in mathematics. However, the proportion of students who attained the nationally expected standard in science declined last year. Over 36% of students attained five or more A* to C GCSE grades in 2006, which is a significant improvement on the previous year. Students' standards have improved as a result of the introduction of adult literacy and numeracy qualifications and the pursuit of a broad range of accreditation which motivates and meets the career aspirations of individuals. The school sets demanding and very ambitious targets. The monitoring of these is becoming more refined and is helping the students to make good progress. Most students know what their targets are and what they need to do to improve. As a result of effective monitoring and support, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and students from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress. The contribution of sports college status to students' positive attitudes is very strong and consequently specialist targets have been met or exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students make good progress in developing their personal skills from the start of Year 7 and quickly gain an understanding of the ethos of the school. Younger students appreciate the student mentors and the Year 7 school council members speak positively about the support from older students and how they 'felt safe in the school from day one.' The views of students are taken very seriously and students are involved in lesson

observations and discussions about effective teaching. Year 11 council members attend governing body meetings and support other students, for example, by selling pens to make sure everyone is equipped for lessons. Students enjoy their education, they speak very positively about the individual help teachers give them and feel supported when they make mistakes or find work difficult. However, a small minority of students exhibit poor behaviour in the corridors and outside lessons. Attendance is improving and the very positive approach to tackling absence supports the students and their families. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are encouraged to recognise and respect different views, cultures and beliefs. Sports college status is having a positive impact and students speak enthusiastically about sporting facilities, extra-curricular activities and healthy eating. The contribution that the students make to the community is good and they are proud of their fund raising. They leave Ellis Guilford with the skills and qualities which enable a very high proportion of them to move directly into education, employment or training.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good although there is some variation in the quality. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. Planning is usually detailed with the purpose of lessons being made clear. However, when the organisation and structure of the lesson is unclear, students fail to make the progress they might. Great care is taken in some lessons to ensure the tasks set for students match the levels that they are working at and that learning activities interest and stimulate them. In the best lessons there is a brisk pace, work is challenging and involves students in their learning, and therefore they make good progress. Teachers manage behaviour well and relationships between staff and students are positive, but a minority of students become restless when there are too few opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. Students delight in opportunities for practical work such as role play, which also extends their literacy skills. The school has good systems in place for assessing students' work but there is inconsistency in the use of the information teachers have about students for use in planning lessons and to set targets for students. Excellent practice in some lessons of recording targets in books meant students had constant reminders of their learning goals. Marking is very helpful when it tells students how to improve their work but practice is inconsistent. Students relish being entrusted with assessing their own work and that of fellow students. This approach develops their skills in critical thinking as well as encouraging them to try harder.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The very careful planning of what is offered ensures that the provision meets the needs of all students. Consequently, it is increasingly successful in promoting their achievement and improving attitudes to learning. Students

have benefited greatly from the school's sports college status through the vastly increased choice of activities available to them. Their improved physical skills are complemented by the leadership opportunities such as 'junior sports leaders'. Students' understanding of the benefits of keeping fit has resulted in students appreciating the availability of healthy eating options. The school's innovative use of a local chef to advise students about menus developed into exciting and relevant learning opportunities in other subjects. Throughout the school, the curriculum is balanced but is very carefully adapted and extended to motivate students of all abilities and promote progress. Students enjoy their learning because they can see it has relevance for them. Even more significantly it has made students proud of their learning achievements and built up their self worth. This begins from Year 7 when new students are helped to see the connections between subjects in order to make learning more effective. At the heart of all learning is imaginative provision for literacy development, which is central to raising standards throughout the school. The policy that every pupil pursues at least one vocational course illustrates the school's commitment to broadening students' education and equipping them with a broad range of skills for adult life. This is enhanced by an extensive programme of personal development and citizenship which includes effective work related learning made possible by very good links with other providers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Support is focused on ensuring that all students' needs are met and effective plans are in place to ensure a smooth transition from primary school. The Year 7 induction programme is exemplary and in the first weeks of term all students receive support in adjusting to the secondary school ethos. The school has an inclusive approach and students with physical disabilities are able to gain access to the full curriculum and participate in school trips. Staff work with students to resolve conflict and relationships are good. One student stated that, 'No problem is too small and staff are always supportive and suggest a way forward.' Teachers in Year 9 make sure that students are well prepared to follow appropriate courses in Years 10 and 11. Effective careers advice and guidance helps to ensure students have the right information about further education and employment. Students receive support after they have left school and there are very strong links with further and higher education colleges. The tracking of progress against targets has improved and year teams regularly discuss with students how they can improve their work. The new building and the sports centre have had a positive effect on the relationship with parents and carers, resulting in them visiting the site more regularly. Discussions are under way to extend parental involvement in the school and in their children's education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher offers strong leadership and is well supported by an experienced senior leadership team. The skills of the two deputy headteachers complement the headteacher well and together they make a forceful team for school improvement based on a detailed knowledge of their school. A core belief, which is to provide an education which meets the personal needs of students permeates decision making, monitoring and the strategic direction of the school. Sports college status has been well used to improve the quality of life of the students and the wider community. All leadership teams have clear aims and a desire to raise standards. These work closely together to support students and to develop the work of middle managers. Some subject leaders monitor, evaluate and review standards rigorously in their departments leading to effective planning for improvement. However, in a minority of department reviews and monitoring do not focus enough on improving the consistency and quality of teaching. Governors are well informed about what happens in school and know what the priorities for improvement are. They give generously of their time to fulfil their responsibilities.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| 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? | 2 |
| 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

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| 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

6 October 2006 Dear Students Ellis Guilford School and Sports College, Bar Lane, Basford, Nottingham, NG6 0HT Thank you for welcoming me and the inspection team into your school. We appreciated how you welcomed us into your lessons, talked to us in the corridors and shared your opinions about your Ellis Guilford. Your views and the opinions of your parents and carers have helped us to understand what the school is really like. You've told us that the school is a place where you're listened to, have good opportunities to learn and are prepared for your adult life. We agree. You make good progress and get to follow a wide range of courses and activities which are stimulating and interesting, ranging from horticulture to working with a local chef to create healthy options for the Ellis Guilford Cafe. We are pleased that older students help Year 7 settle into the school, that you are involved in observing lessons and talking about what makes learning interesting for you and that you have plenty of opportunities to show leadership as a result of the school's sports college status. You are rightly proud of your school and, just like the adults who work with you, you want it to get even better. You'll be pleased to know that our recommendations for what the school should do to improve further include that in your lessons you do even more of the work! Your teachers should help you to ask more questions, solve problems, take on more responsibilities, explain to other students how well they are doing and what they could do better, and how you yourself can improve. From what we saw of your reaction when you had these opportunities in lessons, you'll enjoy the challenge and your progress will be even better. Thank you again for making our two days with you so enjoyable. Yours sincerely, David Simpson HMI