

Bethnal Green Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100971
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	301195
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Adrian Lyons HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	799
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Lesley Pavitt
Headteacher	Mr Mark Keary
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2005
School address	Gosset Street Bethnal Green London E2 6NW
Telephone number	020 7920 7900
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. At the previous inspection in October 2005 the school was placed in special measures because it was failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education. HMI subsequently visited the school on four occasions to monitor its progress, and re-inspected the school in July 2007.

Description of the school

Bethnal Green Technology College is a smaller than average mixed 11-16 comprehensive school which is undersubscribed. Less than one third of students are girls. The proportions of students who are entitled to free school meals, are from an ethnic minority background or for whom English is not their first language are very high. Most students come from Weavers and Spitalfields, two of the most deprived wards in the country. The number of students with special educational needs including statements is above the national average. Half the students are Bangladeshi and the second largest ethnic group is of Black Caribbean and African background. A high proportion of students in Years 8 to 11 join the school after the start of the school year. Many students have joined the school from the neighbouring borough as a result of school closures. The school is a specialist technology college in mathematics, science and technology. A new headteacher began work in June 2006. Since then there have been substantial changes to the senior leadership team.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

When the school was placed in special measures the key areas for improvement were:

- leaders and managers need to recognise urgently the weaknesses and identify the immediate priorities and direction for the school
- produce a clear action plan for improvement, the success of which can be measured and evaluated
- improve the quality of teaching and learning for all students especially those who need support and those who require greater challenge
- raise standards of student behaviour and achievement and offer a more harmonious and cohesive community for all students

There has been good progress in all these areas. The school now provides its students with a satisfactory and improving education with good elements. The new leadership team has been highly successful in changing the culture inside the school and the image outside the school. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, the school now feels safe and an enjoyable place to be for students and staff. Standards are rising and students are making satisfactory progress. The curriculum is being adapted to better meet the needs of all students and enhance the quality of the technology curriculum. The school has not yet taken advantage of the many alternatives to traditional GCSE courses available to interest students in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching has improved greatly and behaviour has been transformed. This is the result of the hard work and commitment of leaders, staff and students. One student told inspectors that 'learning and teaching are at the heart of the school.'

From low starting points all groups of students are now making satisfactory progress and achieving in line with expectations. Teaching is far more consistent in approach than was previously the case. While the quality of the teaching experienced by students is still variable nearly all inadequate teaching has been eliminated and much is now good.

One reason for students' improved achievement is that they are well cared for and supported in a caring environment. Students really enjoy coming to school and feel they are able to achieve well. The conditions now exist for them to do so. The school uses its resources well and provides good value for money. As a Year 9 student said: 'The head listens and really makes things happen.'

Leaders and managers have driven improvement over the last year. This has been supported very well by a wide range of external partners including the local authority and London Challenge. Middle leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring and helping to improve their areas of responsibility. They are involved in self evaluation but its quality and impact is inconsistent across departments. Staffing remains stable and this enhances the school's harmonious community. The immense improvements over the last year provide ample evidence of the good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards by:

- further developing and entrenching recent improvements in teaching and learning and middle leadership to bring about greater consistency
- ensuring the curriculum fully meets the needs of all students

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Their standards on entry are below national expectations and their standards on leaving at age sixteen are below average. These outcomes represent good improvement since the time of the last inspection. The students' 2006 national assessments in English, mathematics and science at the age of fourteen were below average. Their achievements were satisfactory in English and science and unsatisfactory in mathematics. This year, standards are higher and achievements better; mathematics results have improved dramatically. At GCSE standards in 2006 were below average. A significant number of students underachieved, particularly Bangladeshi boys. Teacher assessments for 2007 provide strong evidence to indicate that GCSE results will be higher this year and achievement will be at least satisfactory.

Results generally have improved substantially following better teaching, careful tracking of students' progress and greatly improved student attitudes to learning. The school has set itself challenging targets in national assessments for Year 9 and in GCSE results. Year 9 national test results in mathematics and science show these have been exceeded in 2007. Students new to the school, those for whom English is an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive effective support from specialist staff and progress as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well being are good. Students enjoy school and appreciate the way in which the school has involved them in improving many aspects of its life in the past year. Most students' attitudes to education are exceptionally positive. They know that they are listened to and that actions follow from their considered comments. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Membership of the school and year councils and representation on the school governing body and its committees, for example, provide students with excellent opportunities to be responsible members of the school community. In the wider community, many students are helping a major international law firm to better understand and value the diversity of cultural understanding amongst its own staff. Students' behaviour is good. Exclusions and problems between students have reduced to an acceptable level through very effective staff intervention, supported by 'student buddies'. Students feel safe and appreciate their fair, tolerant and highly structured environment. They are knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and enjoy physical activities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with particular strengths in appreciation of cultural diversity and moral and social understanding. Through enterprise and financial education, they are well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Almost all lessons are at least satisfactory, and many are good. Teachers work hard to create a positive working climate in class, promoting good behaviour and attitudes to learning. They make sure that students understand the purpose of the lesson and what they are expected to learn. They plan carefully, using data about students' prior learning to help them take account of the different abilities and needs of their classes. In the best lessons, teachers make sure that all their students are suitably challenged - for example, through carefully structured pair and group work and skilful questioning. Teaching assistants support students to become independent learners. There has been a lot of staff training so that teachers are clear about the mechanics of a good lesson. The quality of the delivery is still variable so that, in some lessons, some students or groups do not make the progress they might. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) and especially interactive whiteboards to support learning is developing but is used more often to assist the teacher than engage students.

Students' progress is regularly checked by their teachers, who sometimes involve them in assessing their own or others' work. Students' written work is regularly marked, usually with helpful suggestions as to how it can be improved. Most students understand their attainment levels and what they need to do to make further progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a curriculum that is satisfactory and has some strengths. Statutory requirements are met and courses in religious education, information and communication technology and citizenship are assessed through GCSE examinations. Enterprise activities, input from City of London businesses and the development of financial capability all prepare students well for the world of work. There is an increasing and varied range of extra curricula programmes including sports and subject support. Teachers give up time at weekends to run classes on mathematics, technology and history.

Currently the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 does not meet well enough the needs and interests of many students because it is limited to GCSE subjects. From September well thought out vocational provision for some students will include BTEC courses in construction and music technology. Students are already enrolled and appropriate staffing is in place. This will further enhance the school's technology status.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care guidance and support is good and is well managed by the school. Staff know students very well and enjoy a positive and purposeful relationship. This is based on a clear focus from staff on ensuring that teaching and learning recognise and respond to individual differences. Data is used effectively to monitor individual students' academic progress and identify those who may be underachieving. Clear targets are provided for students and a range of support is available for those who are underachieving. Students are involved in setting targets and are increasingly being provided with information to ensure they make appropriate progress.

Reporting to parents is thorough and provides information which clearly identifies student targets.

Gifted and talented students are identified and teachers provide them with relevant and challenging work. Those students whose first language is not English and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported in lessons and make progress in line with other students.

Appropriate arrangements for child protection are in place and are understood by all staff. Vulnerable students are recognised early and receive good support.

Relationships between students are harmonious and behaviour of students around the school is good. An active school council represents students very well and the school has responded positively to many of its recommendations. A Year 8 student said 'Since Year 7 there has been an amazing change. We all now get on well and support each other.' The school works successfully with a range of external agencies to ensure that students receive appropriate support and guidance. There is a good programme for careers guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspirational and dynamic headteacher has been instrumental in improving the quality of learning and achievement across the school. Students comment on how the headteacher has transformed the school and their life chances. He is well supported by his new and very effective senior leadership team. However, there remain inconsistencies in the effectiveness of subject leaders in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. Performance, including the quality of teaching and learning, is now effectively monitored and evaluated and this is used to drive improvement. The effectiveness of self-evaluation is improving across the school and challenging targets are being set for student achievement. Improvement planning is robust at whole school level and areas identified for development are highly appropriate. Staff are really committed to ensuring every student really matters enabling them to make better progress. New leadership and management of financial resources are ensuring the school is working towards achieving better value for money. The governing body is increasingly effective in its role as a supportive and critical friend of the school.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
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

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

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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Annex A

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

23 July 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Bethnal Green Technology College, London, E2 6NW

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do. We believe your school is a satisfactory and improving school with good features. Most importantly you have told us on each of our visits over the last years how much the school had improved. You were really passionate about your school, your teachers and especially your headteacher. As a result of the improvements you told us about and the way we could see that your behaviour and attitudes have been transformed we have decided that your school no longer needs special measures and we would like to give our reasons.

- Standards are rising and you are now making satisfactory progress. We agree with the school that with the help of your teachers you can do even better.
- Teaching has improved and many of your lessons are good. You have a very clear idea of what makes good teaching and you are helping your teachers to make teaching even better.
- We were very impressed by your personal development. You clearly enjoy school and teachers enjoy teaching you.
- The school has developed good systems for keeping track of how well you are doing. You know your levels and teachers help you understand how to improve.
- The school's leaders and managers have worked very hard to improve the school. They have involved you in this through school and year councils and as student governors. The school values your ideas so keep them coming.

To make an even better school we have asked the leaders to help you by:

- assisting teachers with leadership roles to work with their teachers so that more of your lessons are at least good
- ensuring the curriculum fully meets the needs of all students by offering a wider range of subjects in Year 10 and 11.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons Her Majesty's Inspector