

Clapton Girls' Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100278
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307348
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Russell HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	919
6th form	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Pooley
Headteacher	Ms C Day
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2005
School address	Laura Place Lower Clapton Road London E5 0RB
Telephone number	020 8985 6641
Fax number	020 8986 4686

Age group	11–18
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Inspection number	307348

© Crown copyright 2008

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 Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the curriculum; teaching, learning and achievement in the sixth form; students' personal development and well-being; aspects of care, guidance and support. Evidence was gathered from: visits to lessons; discussions with students and staff; parents' views; analysis of data and other written evidence. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area to the north east of the London Borough of Hackney. Most students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and over 70% speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly above the national average. The school was designated as a specialist technology college in 1998 and is the lead school in a local education improvement partnership. A sixth form opened in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Students are rightly proud to attend and almost all parents are full of praise. One summed up the views of many when she wrote, 'My daughter is very happy about everything in her school and that makes a happy mother as well.'

Results in national tests and examinations have improved significantly in recent years and levels of achievement are consistently very high. Students make rapid progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. They enter the school with standards that are substantially below national averages. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average. No group of students underachieves. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well because of the excellent support they receive. Standards in the core subjects of mathematics, science and English are high and a large proportion of students achieve five or more higher grades including these subjects.

How are students able to make such rapid progress? The answer lies in the consistently high quality of teaching. As one parent wrote, 'I am very pleased with the progress she is making. I think it is all down to the teaching and the efforts the teachers put in.' The very large majority of lessons are good or better and a significant number are outstanding. Lessons are very well planned. They are tightly structured, varied and interesting. Excellent relationships help to create a positive and supportive learning environment, where students are not afraid to ask for help. As a result, students are very well motivated and enjoy learning. The curriculum is also excellent. The school regularly reviews and refines it to ensure that it meets the needs of all students very closely. The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides a broad and diverse range of options. At Key Stage 3, there is strong language and literacy support for students at an early stage of learning English and those who require additional support. The range and quality of enrichment activities is outstanding and considerable numbers of students regularly take part in clubs, sporting activities and educational visits.

Systems for supporting and caring for students are also excellent. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and staff work hard to meet students' diverse and often challenging needs. Highly effective processes are in place to manage behaviour and attendance. Students report that they feel safe in school and that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and firmly. Systems for tracking progress are impressive. Students are monitored very closely and staff are quick to spot when individuals are not doing as well as they could. When this happens, they offer a wide range of additional support to help accelerate progress.

All of this excellent provision helps to create a very positive ethos. Students are happy in school and attendance is consistently above average. Behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Students from different backgrounds are tolerant and supportive of each other. They are given many opportunities to learn about each other's cultural backgrounds. They also have extensive opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community, for example through the well-developed school council and student prefect scheme. A range of provision is in place to ensure that students are able to live healthy lifestyles. Students' high achievement, their well developed personal skills and their positive attitudes to learning make a very strong contribution to their future employability and economic well-being. The proportion continuing in education after Year 11 is much higher than the local average and a large proportion of students aspire to progress to university.

The school's consistently high performance in so many areas is the result of excellent leadership. The headteacher is an outstanding leader and is well supported by a very strong senior team. Leadership across the school is consistently very effective. Thorough processes for quality assurance are in place, and leaders have a detailed and very accurate understanding of strengths and areas for potential development. There is no complacency and leaders are rigorous in working to secure further improvements. The school has made excellent use of its status as a specialist technology college. Standards in the specialist areas are high and students achieve very well in these subjects. The school has developed a range of strong links with local schools and with other community partners. The school's capacity to maintain its excellent performance and to improve still further is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The new sixth form has made a superb start. Although less than a year old, it is already good. The leadership of the new venture has been outstanding and the sixth form is very well placed to continue its rapid development.

Many teachers were new to sixth form teaching at the start of the year. The school is providing sharply focussed training and support to enable them to undertake their new responsibilities. Teachers are also listening very closely to what students are saying about their experiences of lessons in the sixth form and they are using this information to help them to develop and refine their teaching approaches. As a result, the quality of teaching in the sixth form is good and improving further. Although they are yet to take national examinations, the school's rigorous tracking data demonstrate that students are already making good progress in their learning.

The new sixth form curriculum is developing well. Leaders listened to students very carefully to help them to create an initial curriculum that meets their needs well. However, the sixth form is still small and this inevitably limits the range of courses that are currently available. As the sixth form grows, leaders are looking very carefully at opportunities to extend the range of courses that they are able to offer. Opportunities for enrichment are diverse and popular with students.

Sixth form students are very well supported and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are very positive about the sixth form and they have excellent attitudes to learning. Although only in Year 12, students have already been given extensive and very helpful guidance about their options when they leave the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop teaching, learning, and the curriculum in the sixth form so that they reach the outstanding quality seen in the rest of the school.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
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?	1	2
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

05 June 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Clapton Girls' Technology College, London, E5 0RB

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings. We judged the school to be outstanding.

We were very impressed by your school. The atmosphere is excellent and you are very well behaved and supportive of each other. Attitudes to learning are outstanding and a very large number of students continue in education beyond Year 11. The quality of lessons is very high. This helps you to make rapid progress and to achieve high results. The school also supports you very well and gives you a lot of extra help when you need it.

The school set up a sixth form this year. While still very new, it has got off to an excellent start. The sixth form curriculum and the quality of lessons are good, although not yet outstanding as in the rest of the school. Leaders are concentrating on improving these areas further and they are developing well. We agree that they are important priorities for the school.

The school's leaders are doing an excellent job. Although the school is already outstanding, everyone wants to make it even better. You are clearly very proud of your school. We think that you are right to be!

Yours sincerely,

Chris Russell

Her Majesty's Inspector