

Ickburgh School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100312
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307354
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Stuart Charlton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	77
6th form	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Corrigan
Headteacher	Ms S Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2003
School address	Ickburgh Road Clapton London E5 8AD
Telephone number	020 8806 4638
Fax number	020 8806 7189

Age group	2–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Ickburgh School caters for pupils aged 2 to 19 who have a statement of special educational need, or who are undergoing assessment. Pupils admitted to the school have increasingly more profound and complex difficulties. The majority live within the borough of Hackney, but some come from outside its boundaries. Nearly two thirds are entitled to a free school meal and about half have English as a second language. Ickburgh is federated with Downsview School, having the same headteacher and governing body. Downsview School was inspected at the same time as this inspection and a separate report is available for the school. Ickburgh has gained the School Sports award and is working towards Healthy Schools' status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ickburgh is a good school with some outstanding features, notably in pupils' personal development. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and clearly identifies the strengths in the provision and those areas which need to be improved.

All pupils, including those of different backgrounds and abilities, achieve well. Although standards are very low, almost all pupils achieve their challenging individual targets and some exceed them. This represents good achievement and is based on good teaching and the effective way in which staff support pupils in developing their confidence and independence. Very good relationships are established between pupils and staff. Along with a consistent approach to behaviour management, these help to bring about significant improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Both attendance and behaviour are good overall. Staff make good use of resources and ensure that learning is fun. There are occasions, however, where they do not make the best use of information about pupils' progress to fully challenge the learning of all, particularly those pupils with the most complex needs.

Overall, the curriculum has a good balance of academic and vocational courses that prepare pupils effectively for life after school, particularly for those in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. A very varied programme of enrichment makes an important contribution to developing pupils' motivation and aspirations. An identified school priority is to review the provision to ensure that the increasingly complex needs of pupils are fully met. The school has good links with other schools and colleges and pupils make a good contribution to both the school and the wider community. The care that pupils receive is of a high quality, and support for their personal development is very good. The support and advice that pupils receive for their academic development is good and, in a safe and secure environment, they gain the skills they will need in the wider world.

The headteacher gives a very clear lead about how the provision should develop and, along with the senior team, provides clear direction for the work of the school. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The information the school has about pupils' progress is not always sufficiently well shared with staff, parents and governors to ensure that they are clear about how well the school is doing. Consequently, governors in particular, are not as effective as they could be in acting as a critical friend to the school. The school has a good capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students make good progress and achieve well as a result of good teaching. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and promotes students' personal development well. Good opportunities are provided for students to develop the skills they will need in later life. The school has rightly identified that a key priority is to further develop the curriculum to address the changing needs of the students, particularly for those who will move into Year 12 in September. Nearly all students move on to further education due to the high quality care and good academic guidance they are given. The leadership provided by the senior team and the coordinator working together is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's achievements and progress are good. Staff provide a safe and secure environment and children settle quickly into the school routines. Children's skills are carefully assessed so that teaching is usually well matched to their needs and abilities. However, as in other parts of the school, there are occasions when staff do not fully challenge those with the most complex needs. The curriculum covers all the expected areas for children of this age with effective use of both the indoor and outdoor environment. Along with the excellent relationships that are established, this plays an important part in helping children to quickly gain good levels of confidence and independence. Overall, leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and there is clarity about the direction of future improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that staff fully challenge the learning of all pupils, particularly those with the most complex needs.
- Implement the planned changes to the curriculum, particularly in the sixth form, to ensure the increasingly complex needs of students are fully met.
- Make best use of the information the school holds about pupils' progress to enable governors to act effectively as a critical friend and ensure that pupils, staff and other stakeholders are clear about how well it is doing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

All pupils, including those who have English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well given their starting points, which are well below those expected nationally. The school has developed a very good system for tracking pupils' progress based on sub dividing the P levels into small learning steps. These are used well to set clear and challenging targets for each pupil against which their progress can be assessed. However, this information is not used to advantage to ensure that teachers, parents, governors and other stakeholders are clear about how well pupils are doing. By the time they leave school, all students gain nationally recognised qualifications through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). These prepare them well for life after school and the majority continue into further education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is central to the school's work, is outstanding. Moments of reflection are used extremely well to help pupils to develop awareness of the world beyond themselves. Pupils make good gains in developing their self-esteem, independence and social skills. They develop a clear understanding about what is right and wrong, and show a very keen sense of enjoyment; for example when playing their instruments in an Early Years lesson. All take great pride in their school, and attend regularly. They work and play together in a racially harmonious atmosphere

and their behaviour is good. All pupils make good gains in learning to manage their own behaviour. The school council plays an important role in ensuring pupils can make their views count. All pupils know that the staff will take time to listen to them if they have any concerns. They develop a good understanding of healthy living and are extremely aware of the need to be safety conscious, for example, when using the playground climbing equipment. They make a good contribution to both the school and the local community, for instance when working with local schools on the China project. Comments made by those who work with pupils outside school show how well pupils are gaining the skills needed to act as members of the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Across the school, teaching is good. Staff are very positive in their approach and use praise well to increase pupils' motivation and to improve both their concentration and behaviour. Support staff are an important part of the team and make a valuable contribution to pupils' development. Teachers plan lessons conscientiously, and use resources very well, particularly in classrooms that are often short of space. There are models of outstanding practice, where staff use signs, symbols and gestures to make learning meaningful. A good example of this was seen in a numeracy/literacy lesson with primary aged pupils. However, teachers do not always make the best use of information about pupils' progress to fully challenge the learning of all pupils, particularly those with the most complex needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Overall, the curriculum is good. A well-focused review of provision is currently taking place to better reflect the increasingly complex needs of the pupils. There is still more to do to ensure that the curriculum fully matches the needs of all pupils, especially for those students who will move into Year 12 in September. Across the school, a high emphasis is given to personal development and the provision builds well on the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and ensures a systematic development of their key skills. Enrichment is very good and a wide range of visits are undertaken.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Through the very effective key worker system, pupils receive good support to develop their personal skills. Staff show a strong commitment to putting the pupils' needs first. Health and safety are given high priority and teaching and support staff are vigilant at all times. Risk assessments are thorough, and child protection procedures are robust and effective. Staff implement the school's procedures conscientiously and the pupils say that 'the teachers help us a lot'.

Information about the pupils' academic performance is used effectively to set challenging targets for each individual. There are occasions, however, where staff do not make best use of these to ensure that pupils are clear about how well they are doing. Pupils receive helpful advice when decisions have to be made about their next steps when they leave school. For students in Years 12 and 13, link courses at local colleges enable them to experience a range of vocational options.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher provides clear vision and direction about how provision needs to develop. Good systems have been established to monitor and evaluate provision and these give a clear view of strengths and weaknesses. Support for teachers new to school is good and enables staff to quickly develop their practice and give of their best. Governors, particularly parent governors, are very supportive of the work of the school. However, the information they are given about pupils' development does not make best use of the school's data about pupils' progress. This limits their effectiveness in being able to act as a critical friend to the school. Good links have been developed with other agencies, such as Social Services and Child Protection, to ensure that pupils receive the help they need in their lives outside school.

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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
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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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	3	
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

11 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ickburgh School, London, E5 8AD

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I inspected your school on 29 and 30 January 2008. I particularly enjoyed my meeting with the school council.

You all showed me how much you enjoyed your lessons and how much you valued the help and support the teachers give you. Teachers make learning fun and arrange a very varied range of extra activities so that you are keen to learn. You mentioned that you really enjoy swimming, games and P.E. and that you like going out on visits. The very good relationships that staff have established with you are used well to help you to improve your concentration and behaviour. All staff care for you very well indeed and make sure you are safe at all times.

The senior team have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are keen to see that Ickburgh improves even further. I have asked them to work with the staff to make sure that, at all times, every one of you gets work that really makes you think. I want them to ensure that the curriculum fully meets the needs of the increasing number of pupils with complex needs. You can play an important part by trying your hardest at all times. I have also asked that the school's governors, some of whom are your parents, to have better information about your progress so that they can check that you are doing your best.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Charlton

Lead Inspector