

Lilian Baylis Technology School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100625
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	307426
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Meena Wood HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	624
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms T Clay
Headteacher	Mr G Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	323 Kennington Lane Kennington London SE11 5QY
Telephone number	020 7091 9500
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Age group	11-16
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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

Lilian Baylis Technology College specialises in technology and has achieved National Healthy School Status and Artsmark: Gold. Two thirds of the students are boys. Three quarters of students are eligible for free school meals, a very high proportion. In each Year group, approximately one tenth of students start school at times other than at the start of the academic year. A significantly high proportion, one fifth of students, is refugees or asylum seekers. Just under half of students in school require English Language support and about half have some form of learning difficulty or disability. These proportions are much larger than in most schools. The vast majority of students are of minority ethnic heritage, with the largest groups being Black African, Black Caribbean, and Portuguese. Consequently, over fifty languages are spoken in students' homes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lilian Baylis is a good school with outstanding features. The school has very successfully created a cohesive and welcoming community where students from over forty countries have great respect for each other and for all adults. The well- designed, open learning environment with its colourful images of students enjoying study and school life and stimulating displays of students' work, successfully encourages students to develop greater self-esteem and higher aspirations. Students are very proud of their school, they know that they are valued and appreciate all that the school can offer them.

Since the last inspection, the school has very successfully addressed many of the areas needing development. An exemplary pastoral system has resulted in outstanding personal development and well-being for all students, good behaviour, and significant reductions in exclusions. The school has developed an outstanding and very responsive academic and vocational curriculum that motivates students to attend and to successfully progress at 16 to further education, training and employment. Whilst there are well-structured opportunities within the curriculum to develop students' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, these are not consistently taught across all subjects.

A significant number of students live in very challenging circumstances that include frequent interrupted periods of schooling. The school works hard to ensure the good achievement of most of its students through supportive intervention strategies. Standards are below national averages and improving. Mentoring and taking students' views and preferences into account in curriculum design is increasing motivation and leading to improving examination results.

Teaching and learning are good because teachers know their students well and use informative assessment data to plan carefully activities that meet their needs. However, there is inconsistent checking of students' progress. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively, although some class teachers do not fully involve them in their lesson planning for the benefit all students. Academic guidance is good but there is some inconsistency in marking and not all students receive sufficiently clear guidance on their targets on how to improve. Students receive excellent advice and guidance on choosing their curriculum options and future progression routes to further education, training and employment.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership is exemplary. His vision and clear direction for this inclusive school have successfully focused his highly committed managers and staff on raising achievement for all students. All staff share a common sense of purpose that is best summed up in the school motto 'Transforming the life chances of students'. As one student explained, 'When I came to this country and this school, I was at level 4 and have moved to level 7 in English because of the support I received!' The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is outstanding and gives the school outstanding capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards by:

- checking students' progress more rigorously and showing students how to improve their work
- developing students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills consistently across all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

High numbers of students arrive in school after the start of the academic school year without data on their prior attainment. In 2007, about one third of students taking GCSEs and equivalent examinations in Year 11 were not in the country in Year 6 and many of these arrived in Years 10 and 11. A disproportionate number of these students, in particular boys and high achievers, were in exceptionally difficult circumstances in their personal lives and this had a negative impact on their progress and the results they achieved in their examinations. Those who started school in Year 7 arrived with very low attainment.

By the end of Year 11, however, owing to the considerable pastoral and academic support they received from the school, the majority of the students made good progress, and all made progress expected of them based on their starting points.

In 2007, students' standards in Year 9 and Year 11, whilst improved, were below national averages. Although double the number of students were successful in attaining 5 A*-C GCSE with English and mathematics, than in the previous year, the school did not reach the local authority average and national targets. Lower achieving groups identified by the school include White British, Black Caribbean and Portuguese boys, especially, those from troubled backgrounds. In the current academic year, the school has identified individual underachieving students more robustly and has put in place timely and responsive interventions. School data for Year 9 and Year 11 students predicts significant increases in GCSEs and equivalent vocational examinations, so that the school is on line to attain its challenging targets. The school is anticipating a 100% pass rate in Young Apprenticeships this year.

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress as do those at early stages of English, because the school has targeted effective support that addresses both their pastoral and academic needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' excellent personal development and well-being are apparent in every aspect of their life at school. Students' good behaviour is continually encouraged and rewarded in and out of lessons; they are confident, polite and courteous. Students and their parents agree that the school responds immediately to the slightest hint of inappropriate behaviour, language or bullying. One Year 7 boy commented 'This is the safest place I know and I know that they care about me'. Students follow a healthy lifestyle and engage in sport and after school clubs.

Students' attendance is good and teachers rigorously challenge lateness to lessons. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and taught very well within tutorials and other activities across the curriculum. A recent, very effective example was the study of Islamic religious art and its ancient links with mathematics. Students respect different religious and cultural traditions, along with the concepts of what may or may not be acceptable within these beliefs. Students develop a very strong sense of morality and responsibility towards their local communities through lively anti-bullying activities and citizenship lessons, with their emphasis on the role of living within a democracy. The school works extremely well with students to overcome the exceptionally challenging external circumstances facing many of them outside the school, such as gang related crime.

Students develop sound team and collaborative skills through the excellent opportunities they have in the work place and visits from outside mentors. This ensures that students are very well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have very good subject expertise, know their students very well and use the regularly updated and excellent assessment data to plan activities that successfully build on students' existing knowledge. Interactive white boards, when used effectively, encourage students to participate well. In one good science lesson, students were highly motivated in their learning when asked to research the properties of ionic compounds on an IT search engine. In lessons where students make the most progress, teachers check students' learning with a series of 'mini plenary sessions', through sharing examples of good work with other students and encouraging them to comment on these. In the words of one student, 'Although you're learning you don't realise it! Teachers listen to you and help you as much as they can!' In mathematics, recently arrived students in the country have opportunities to have the text translated and write their answer in their mother tongue for public examinations.

However, in a few lessons, tasks for students lack challenge, activities do not encourage independent learning and teachers do not sufficiently check students' progress. The majority of the students need to improve their language or literacy skills but not all teachers use their teaching assistants to help develop these skills during lessons. Not all teachers consistently carry out regular and informative marking of students' work. Teachers manage students' behaviour well through motivating activities and have good support from managers in maintaining discipline.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is highly responsive across all key stages and successfully designed to motivate students and increase their achievement. A recent curriculum review, initiated by Year 7 students, resulted in an 'Opening Minds' programme that gave students good opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. This initiative has yet to be implemented throughout the school. As a result Year 7 students settled into school more effectively, and this has reduced the numbers of exclusions. The themed approach to learning in Years 8 and 9 has been effective and students enjoy and greatly value the subject project work that develops sound skills of collaborative team working. Although these changes have only been in place for just over one term, students have a far more positive approach to their learning.

The curriculum provision in Years 10 and 11 is outstanding with its wide range of vocational pathways at level one and two, including BTECs in travel, music, business and ICT. There are work related links with neighbouring colleges and training providers, who provide courses to meet the needs of all students. Introducing GCSE applied science has increased the participation targets to 100% in science.

Students participate in a wide range of enrichment activities that include sports, drama, reading buddies and booster sessions to improve students' achievement.

As part of its specialist school status, the school contributes well to community cohesion through its work with local communities, that is to say, ICT sessions for parents and a Year Y6 science programme with primary schools. A neighbouring school is benefiting well from the school's expertise in the design and technology department.

The curriculum matches students' aspirations and supports excellent progression. A significant number of students, in much higher numbers than the local authority average, enter further training, work related learning and employment at 16.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

In this safe and supportive school, pastoral care and safeguarding procedures are exemplary. The mix of professional backgrounds among the pastoral staff makes liaison with outside agencies very effective. Pastoral staff develop highly supportive relationships with students. A computerised behaviour-tracking scheme keeps all staff well informed. As a result, exclusions are increasingly rare. Vulnerable students and those at risk of underachievement are identified and extremely well supported through appropriate interventions and therapies. One autistic student was keen to explain how well the school had developed his confidence and social skills.

There are frequent reviews of students' academic progress using sound data, and students have targets for every subject. However, sometimes these are too generalised such as 'Complete my work'. Students are not always aware of what they should be doing to improve their work and move to the next level. Students gain excellent information about options and career choices through career fairs and visits from employers and further education providers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Through the excellent leadership of the headteacher, there is a strong ethos of continuous improvement shared by managers and staff. Managers use reliable and constantly updated information on students' achievement and standards to identify underachieving individuals and groups. They set challenging and aspirational targets and produce detailed department action plans. These, along with stakeholders' views, inform the school's self-evaluation that is highly analytical and self-critical. The school knows itself very well, and establishes the right priorities, recognising its strengths and the barriers to improvements. Team leaders work closely with a common sense of purpose and have very effectively implemented recent curriculum changes. The school recognises that there is room for greater sharing of good teaching practice across subjects, as for instance, in the development of the role of the learning support assistants.

The school gives its staff good opportunities for professional development and the appraisal system gives staff a sense of accountability through the setting of performance management targets that are linked into lesson observations and outcomes for students.

Quality assurance systems are highly effective as the school sets high standards for teaching and learning. Internal lesson observations are rigorous, focusing on learning and outcomes for students. Achievement coordinators have recently commenced a sampling of students' work to monitor progress and assessment. The school recognises however, that managers need to ensure greater consistency in marking and target setting.

Governors are very committed and have a clear understanding of school's priorities. Through strong partnerships with external organisations, they are proactive in supporting the school in addressing students' academic and pastoral needs and preparing them well for working life. The school has a very good equality policy and action plan that ensures all students feel part of an inclusive learning environment and are given every opportunity to achieve their potential.

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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
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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.

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

28 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Lilian Baylis Technology School, London, SE11 5QY

Following our recent visit to inspect your school, I am now writing to let you know about our findings. We would like to thank you for your contributions to the inspection. Thank you in particular to those who gave up time to talk to us. It was a pleasure meeting with you and listening to you talk about your best piece of work that you presented to us in small groups. We enjoyed sitting in your lessons, and observed that the majority of you are hard working, well behaved and respectful, and enjoy coming to school.

Your school is a good school with outstanding features. You informed us that you feel safe in the school, and benefit from the excellent choice of courses and wide range of extra curricular activities the school has to offer such as sports and reading buddies. The school works hard to help you to do well in your examinations and course work and gives you good mentoring and support both in and out of lessons. The teaching we saw was good because your teachers know you very well and plan lessons very carefully to help you make good progress. In these lessons, we were very impressed by your motivation and keen attitudes to learning. The headteacher, senior staff and governors lead the school very well and continually encourage you to achieve your potential, even if you find yourselves in difficult circumstances outside of school.

We have asked the school to help you to improve your results even more and to help you develop even better English, mathematics and ICT skills through planning activities differently and greater checking of your learning in all lessons. You can help by attending punctually and regularly and carrying on working hard in your lessons.

We hope that all of you will do well and with the help of the school, realise your future ambitions.

Yours sincerely,

Meena Wood

Her Majesty's Inspector