

Langdon Park Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100966
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	307542
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Asyia Kazmi 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	879
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Wright
Headteacher	Mr Chris Dunne
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Byron Street Poplar London E14 0RZ
Telephone number	020 7987 4811
Fax number	020 7537 7282

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

Langdon Park is an average size, multi-ethnic school. Nearly two thirds of the students are from minority ethnic heritage; predominant groups are of Bangladeshi and African heritage. A very high proportion of students speak English as an additional language.

The school is in an area where there is a high level of deprivation. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above average. Approximately a third of students have learning difficulties, an above average proportion. The proportion of students who have a statement is nearly twice the national average.

The school acquired specialist status in sports in 2005 and has a Sportsmark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Langdon Park School is providing a satisfactory standard of education with a number of strengths. The headteacher's vision for the school is shared by all; there is an emphatic commitment to raising standards and improving the life chances of the students. Senior leaders have created a warm and caring ethos in the school. The good relationship between students of all backgrounds, and between students and adults, is very evident in this harmonious community. Students' personal development and well-being are good. Inclusion is a strength of the school. Much has been done successfully to improve attendance and reduce exclusions. Senior leaders have established strong links with the community and use external services effectively to give good support and guidance to students; this includes business partners to support learning. As a result of this good care and guidance, the proportion of students who continue on in learning, post-16, is higher than local averages.

Attainment on entry to the school is below average. By the end of Year 9 standards are well below average. In 2007 progress in English was satisfactory but in mathematics and science it was inadequate between Years 7 and 9. However, current data and the school's own tracking show these students' progress is now satisfactory. Students make rapid progress from Years 10 to 11. Progress overall is satisfactory and boys do particularly well. Students with learning difficulties also make good progress because of the focused support provided to them.

Although satisfactory systems are in place to check the work of the school, they sometimes lack rigour. This led to the slow progress in improving achievement in Key Stage 3. All staff know what the school's key priorities are, but it is only recently they have identified specific actions which will deliver results in Key Stage 3. Furthermore, there is a lack of rigour in monitoring and evaluating the impact of these actions. For example, there are inconsistencies in some areas of the school's work such as the quality of teaching, marking and precision in the curriculum targets set for students in the termly reports.

Senior leaders have developed the role of subject leaders in monitoring and improving teaching and learning. Through focused lesson observations, subject leaders are analysing strengths and weaknesses in teaching and planning appropriate actions to address them. The role of learning coordinators in linking pastoral issues with students' progress has been effective. Individual termly reports are giving parents and students much clearer information on progress. Many of these developments are recent and, although they have had a positive impact on students' progress in Key Stage 4, impact in Key Stage 3 is more recent.

Teaching overall is satisfactory. There is good teaching in the school; this is exemplified by well-structured lessons with a variety of activities which engage and enthuse students. There are also good examples of teachers' questioning to develop students' reasoning skills but this is not consistent across the school and in some lessons students' skills in this area are poor. In Key Stage 3, in particular, some teachers do not always have high expectations of students and do not plan their teaching to build upon the knowledge and understanding students already have. Subject leaders recognise this and have recently established systems that enable teachers to have much better information on the strengths and weaknesses in students' learning and to use this information to plan subsequent teaching.

Despite extensive disruption due to building works, the school has been successful in implementing its plans for development as a sports college. Students are unanimous in their praise for the facilities available to them and the curriculum has been enhanced to ensure all

students are able to gain a sports-related qualification. Good links have also been established between sports and other subject areas, for example in mathematics and English.

An extensive range of visits and residential trips, including subject specific revision trips, broaden students' horizons and contribute to their enjoyment of school life. There are many and varied opportunities for students to contribute to their community both within the school and outside it. The work of conflict resolution mentors is particularly noteworthy and contributes to the good behaviour within the school. The vast majority of parents are positive about the work of the school. However, a small number raised concern about behaviour in school; inspection evidence and feedback from students show behaviour in school is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement between Years 7 and 9 by ensuring teaching builds upon students' previous knowledge and understanding.
- Embed the use of assessment data to ensure teachers have high expectations and challenge all students in lessons.
- Establish rigour in monitoring and evaluating the impact of developments to ensure consistency in good practice across the school.

A small proportion of the 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 section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are well below average because students' achievement has been too variable in the past. Senior leaders recognise that improving students' progress between Years 7 and 9, particularly in mathematics and science, is a key priority. New subject leaders in these subjects have put in place more rigorous monitoring and assessment systems. These are beginning to pay dividends and inspection evidence shows progress currently is satisfactory in Key Stage 3.

Students catch up and make good progress in Key Stage 4. In 2007 there was a significant rise in the proportion of students who attained 5 good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. The proportion of students who attain 5 or more A*-G GCSE passes is above average and reflects the inclusive ethos of the school.

Standards by the end of Year 11 are below average. Given students' starting points in Year 7 this represents satisfactory progress overall. All groups of students, including those who are learning English as an additional language, make at least satisfactory progress. Senior leaders have placed a particular emphasis on raising boys' achievement, this has been successful and they make good progress. A group of students who were targeted for intervention by senior leaders made outstanding progress. Senior leaders are extending this good practice to other year groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school has worked hard to improve attendance, and it is now broadly average. Students enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and report that bullying rarely occurs because the

students themselves monitor it though mentors and buddies, supported well by staff. 'We have zero tolerance for bullying here,' one student told inspectors. They speak enthusiastically about the clubs they attend and the trips they go on that enhance their learning. A dance group came into school during the inspection and provided an inspiring cross-curricular 'Dance and Symmetry' event.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall and students are particularly aware of moral and social values. Students understand right and wrong and show care and consideration for others. They take responsibility well, for instance as democratically-elected school council members or when acting as mentors to younger students. Students are well informed about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy their contributions to the school and local community, for instance, in the annual summer events which provide further opportunities for personal development. Skills in literacy and information and communication technology contribute to the good preparation for their life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students behave well in lessons and show a positive attitude to their work. Good relationships are apparent between students and teachers. In the best lessons, brisk and energetic teaching keeps students interested and involved. In these lessons teachers have high expectations and they apply a variety of teaching strategies. They question students well to develop their thinking and understanding. Students are very enthusiastic about lessons where they are learning actively. However, in other lessons, work is too strongly teacher directed and tasks do not always match individual students' needs. In Key Stage 3 lessons in particular, the levels of challenge and teachers' expectations fail to stretch students fully and does not take into account what they can already do.

Students are well informed about the levels and grades they are working at, but in some subjects they are less sure about what they need to do to improve. Detailed assessment data is available to teachers, however it is not always used to guide planning. The quality of marking and the setting of homework are inconsistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. All statutory requirements are met including provision for citizenship. The school's specialist status has contributed well to the personal development of students and led to a number of additional accredited courses and enrichment activities across the curriculum. In Years 7 and 8, intervention programmes are well established to meet the needs of lower attaining students as well as those learning English as an additional language.

The curriculum provides well for all groups of students and is responsive to local circumstances. For example, students can study a wide range of community languages up to GCSE standards and can be entered early in geography. All Year 10 students have access to a range of GCSE and vocational education courses. An alternative curriculum for a specific group of disaffected and lower attaining students is successful in securing employability and life skills. Students appreciate the approachability and support provided by specialist staff. A significant strength of the school is extra-curricular provision that involves the majority of students and contributes

to their enjoyment and achievement. Their horizons are stretched by a wealth of competitive sports, business and performing arts activities with a great many off-site excursions and trips. The students benefit from numerous on-site activities to develop self-confidence, including mentoring roles, homework clubs, drama and music events and charity fund raising.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has established good systems to care for, support and guide students. The procedures make a strong, positive impact on their personal development and well-being. Child protection arrangements, risk assessment and recruitment procedures fully meet government guidelines. Students are prepared well for joining the school and make a smooth transfer from their primary schools. This is because they have already met with older students through an organised programme, with trained Year 10 mentors and 'buddies'. A recently introduced system enables teachers to thoroughly analyse and report on students' progress at regular intervals in conjunction with analysis of attendance, homework completion and behaviour. Students are aware of and understand their targets for improvements and the levels they are working at. Progress is reported regularly to parents in meetings that include the students in a strong partnership.

Led by a strong inclusion team, including the learning support staff, the school is proactive in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable students. Effective links with outside agencies work well; the school's practice is considered exemplary by the local authority. Preparation for education or training post 16 is assisted by local business. Strong teamwork, a hallmark of all staff in the school, including learning mentors and the many support staff, promotes the ongoing welfare of each individual.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders have been successful in ensuring the school is a safe, popular and welcoming place for students. They have promoted good links with the local community and external partners to enhance students' well-being. A range of strategies to raise achievement are in place which have been particularly successful in Key Stage 4. New appointments, both at senior and middle leadership level, have further enhanced the leadership team and are addressing the changes that need to be made in Key Stage 3. These are beginning to have an impact.

The school's procedures for evaluating strengths and weaknesses are secure. Satisfactory procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are in place and accompanied by support and intervention for individual staff and departments. However, these are not sufficiently rigorous in identifying precisely where the improvements should be or how senior leaders will check whether these have been successful. Governors are well informed and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

12 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Langdon Park Community School, London, E14 0RZ

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us. We valued the discussions we had with you and I would like to take this opportunity to share our findings.

Overall, your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education with a number of strengths. Staff in your school provide you with good care, guidance and support. You behave well and make a good contribution to your school community as well as involving yourself in many activities, both in and out of school. You told us how much you enjoy using the sports facilities. We were pleased to see your attendance has improved and how so many of you carry on in education or training after your leave school. You were particularly appreciative of how well all students get on with each other.

The progress you make in Years 10 and 11 is good and those of you who were targeted for support made very good progress. However, your achievement overall is satisfactory because you do not make as much progress as you should between Years 7 and 9. This is an important area and we have asked senior leaders to improve this. They are taking the right steps to make sure this happens. You told us you found the progress reports very helpful; your teachers have a lot of information about your learning and we have asked them to use this information to make sure you are challenged in your lessons. Senior leaders have systems in place to check the work of the school, and we have asked them to use these systems to make sure that the improvements they make are successful and your learning is good in all areas of the school.

Thank you once again for your welcome. I wish you and your school every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Asyia Kazmi

Her Majesty's Inspector