

Plashet School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102782
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	308118
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Adrian Lyons 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	Girls
Number on roll	
School	1355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Irene Papadopoulos
Headteacher	Mrs Bushra Nasir CBE
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
School address	Plashet Grove East Ham London E6 1DG
Telephone number	020 8471 2418
Fax number	020 8471 3029

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: whether safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements, how the school monitors the achievement of all students and groups, the reliability of the school's assessment of the quality of teaching, provision for economic well-being, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, behaviour and whether all aspects of provision are as successful as pre-inspection data analysis suggested academic achievement to be. The inspectors gathered evidence from an analysis of data about students' achievements provided by the school, observation of parts of lessons, parents' questionnaires, and discussions with senior staff, subject leaders and students. The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These judgements have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

Plashet School is larger than most other secondary schools. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those whose first language is not English is very high. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above average while the proportion of girls with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Plashet has been a specialist Science college since 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

Near to West Ham football stadium lies this outstanding school. Students enter Year 7 with slightly below average standards. Students' achievement is outstanding because GCSE results are very high compared with the national average. In 2007, two students received letters from the examination board congratulating them on being in the top five candidates in their subject nationally. There are no differences between the achievement of different groups. Students from the many ethnic minority backgrounds represented in the school all attain very high results. Since the last inspection, standards have risen and are consistently very high. The two areas for attention identified by the last inspection are now strong. These were the monitoring of students' progress and the monitoring of the quality of teaching. Students told inspectors that they really could find nothing wrong with the school.

Students and their parents hold the school in very high regard. As a parent wrote, 'Strong management, good teachers. School also takes into account local cultural sensitivities and incorporates this into everyday teaching/learning i.e. dress code, curriculum topics etc. This is a very strong point.' One of the key strengths of the school is the interest and commitment shown by parents. Inspectors were literally overwhelmed by the 729 parental questionnaires returned and this illustrates the very high level of parental interest in the school.

The school's journey in recent years has seen standards and achievement steadily rise while maintaining a largely traditional curriculum. The curriculum meets very well the needs and interests of most of its students and the wishes of their parents. The school recognises that further consideration needs to be given to how the school takes advantage of the wider opportunities becoming available for 14-16 year olds, whilst maintaining the ethos and community for which parents chose the school. Within that constraint the curriculum offered is outstanding. All statutory requirements are met. There is a good take up for the wide range of extra activities offered by the school. As a parent wrote: 'The school motivates students by doing all sort of activities and the school takes students on various trips which makes them confident. Also the school has a lot of activities after school to help them improve in their education.'

A strength of the school is that girls are supported to achieve well in their own community languages. For example, in 2007 six students gained GCE advanced level passes in language examinations while 32 students gained good GCSE passes in Year 10 and five in Year 9. One student gained an A* grade in Year 8.

Since September 2007 the school has enhanced the curriculum further through its specialist status. Targets for specialist status are challenging. Assessment data suggests that students are on track to achieve their target grades. Students who spoke to inspectors valued the opportunity to be able to take three science subjects at GCSE. A new course for Years 7 to 9 is being developed to prepare students better for this. New activities have included a science week aimed at broadening students' views of science, for example to include engineering, art and fashion. There was a 'parents and science' event that attracted a large number of parents. There are increased links with business and more science related work experience placements. The specialism has led to increased links with primary schools. The school believes that its academic success is due to three main factors: the quality of teaching and learning, the motivation and aspirations of the students and parental encouragement. Inspectors found evidence through parental questionnaires, talking to students and observation of lessons around

the school that supports the school's view. This is that teaching is rarely less than good and is often outstanding. Additionally what leads to outstanding learning is the support provided outside of normal lessons, including extra support during holidays and at weekends. As a parent wrote: 'I feel that the support given to the students brings their grades that much higher than they think they can achieve.'

Plashet is a happy and harmonious place. By the time they leave the school, students have become confident and well-rounded individuals because of their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual and moral development is particularly strong. For example, an outstanding religious education lesson used religious art to help students from different faiths to understand the life of Jesus. A feature of the school is the faith assemblies, where students opt to attend one of the simultaneously held assemblies for students from a range of different faiths and a multi-faith assembly. Students are reflective, thoughtful and show an excellent understanding of their own and other cultures. While students are encouraged to explore and apply their own faith, the school appears remarkably free from racial or religious tensions and community cohesion is a key strength. Students show an outstanding awareness of what it means to be a citizen of the United Kingdom in the 21st century.

Students' personal development and well-being are excellent. Students value education and want to succeed. They thoroughly enjoy school and all it has to offer and this is reflected in their good attendance rates. Attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. Students are articulate, confident and show courtesy towards each other and to the adults around them. They know the importance of healthy living and the need to work safely. While there are occasional incidents of bullying or conflict, these are dealt with well. A minority of parents raised concerns regarding behaviour. Where specific claims were made these were investigated by inspectors who were reassured by the school's response. In response to the parental concerns, inspectors observed behaviour in lessons, around the school at break and lunchtime and joined senior staff at the gate at the end of the day. They could find no reason to disagree with the school's self-assessment of outstanding attitudes and behaviour. A small minority of students present challenging behaviour and there are good systems to deal with them.

Students engage enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities and competitive sport. On the day of the inspection, two girls discovered that they had been selected to be in the England handball team. The school council is effective in promoting students' rights and responsibilities. A wide range of responsibilities, such as the Year 11 student leaders enables students to become independent and self-motivated young people. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Careers guidance and preparation for work experience are strongly established and education for financial capability is strong. However whilst opportunities to develop enterprise skills exist, they are not sufficiently planned or assessed to ensure all students receive their entitlement. The school is working to bring greater coherence to this area of provision.

The school provides an outstandingly caring and supportive environment in which students can flourish as both individuals and as part of the community. This is a school where every child really does matter. Child protection procedures are robust, thorough and fully comply with legal requirements. There are very good procedures in place to ensure the smooth transfer of students from their primary schools. Careers advice is effective and enables students to make informed choices about their future education or employment. Procedures for promoting good attendance are thorough and effective resulting in attendance that is above the national average.

Academic guidance is excellent. There are highly effective strategies to support students who are not achieving well enough. The school works very closely with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure that students receive excellent levels of support.

The great success of the school has not come overnight. The headteacher has provided sustained and inspiring leadership over fourteen years. She has created a team of senior and middle leaders who are very effective at ensuring consistency. Relative underperformance in any subject is identified and tackled successfully. Good governance supports and challenges the school, representing the views of the local community.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant weaknesses to report. However, inspectors agree with the school that in order to raise standards further it is necessary to keep the curriculum under review.

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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?	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	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
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
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	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

03 April 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Plashet School, London, E6 1DG

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. It was a joy and privilege for us to visit your school. We believe yours is an outstanding school and here are the reasons.

You achieve extremely well. The results at GCSE are very high and the school gives you an excellent chance to do well. As in every school, some lessons are better than others, but the overall quality of teaching at Plashet is outstanding. You told us about the many opportunities you have out of normal lessons such as trip and visits. It was interesting to talk to some of you about science trips to Flatford Mill and Scotland, and the science and mathematics activities that launched the school's new specialist status. The extra lessons at the weekend or in holidays give you an extra advantage when preparing for your GCSEs.

We observed excellent behaviour around the school and you displayed admirable attitudes to your learning. A minority of your parents believe that behaviour is not good. As a group of students, you can work to change that perception. You told us about how different groups of students get along very well. Students from different races and religions work together and set an example for the community.

Although we have judged your school to be outstanding, that does not mean that it is perfect. Some Year 11 students said they would like more subjects offered. We discussed what you said to us with the headteacher and we are confident that the school is doing its best to give you all a good range of subjects in which you can be successful. The school has good reasons for the subjects that are offered, but is aware of the need to regularly consider what it can offer to you to give you all the best chance to do well in your education and your future life.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons

Her Majesty's Inspector