

Mayfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102858
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	308143
Inspection date	11 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Patricia Metham HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1451
6th form	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Backhouse
Headteacher	Mr Andy Rehling
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	Pedley Road Dagenham RM8 1XE
Telephone number	020 8590 5211
Fax number	020 8597 5729

Age group	11-18
Inspection date	11 October 2007
Inspection number	308143

© Crown copyright 2007

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 an Additional Inspector.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues throughout the school: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, leadership and management, personal development and well-being and care, guidance and support.

Evidence was gained from lesson observations, from discussions with leaders and students and from evaluation of a range of documentation. Students' work was scrutinised during lessons. 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. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Mayfield provides full Extended School service for its students and the community. The school has a greater than average proportion of students from ethnic minority groups; 72% do not have English as their first language, with a significant number in the early stages of speaking English. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Over the past four years, the school has achieved a range of awards and recognitions. These include: Sports Mark in 2004; Healthy Schools, Quality in Study Sport and Silver Arts Mark in 2005; Investors in People status and specialist status for Humanities and Media Arts in 2006. Mayfield is now oversubscribed for entry both to Year 7 and to the sixth form.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Visionary leadership by the headteacher and his senior team and extremely well-directed support from the governing body have ensured striking improvement over the past five years of this good and still improving school. Amongst its exceptional strengths are its sixth form, its quality of care, guidance and support and the outstanding achievement of its students. Mayfield is a proudly multi-cultural community, where respect for all and equality of opportunity are deeply embedded. As a student remarked, 'Loads of cultures! Regardless of culture or age, everyone comes together as one.' The school's diversity is reflected in its staff and the students see teachers as positive role models.

Compared with similar students nationally, Mayfield's students make outstanding progress across Years 7-11. Progress in English is especially impressive given how many students do not have English as their first language. In 2006, the percentage gaining Level 5 and above for English in national tests at the end of Year 9 was higher than the national average. It was a little lower in 2007, affected by the number of students in that cohort who joined the school well after the start of Year 7. Standards reached by the end of Year 9 in mathematics have been below the national average for three years, with girls doing less well than boys. Subject leaders are aware of the need to tackle this but interventions have not yet had a measurable impact. Most students with particular learning needs progress as well as their contemporaries, and additional support is being put in place to support the few who are progressing less well. Action taken to challenge and support students in danger of exclusion has ensured that they have remained engaged and achieved worthwhile results. The school's GCSE results have improved over the past five years and are broadly in line with national figures, so standards attained are average. In the sixth form, levels of attainment have been rising steadily; standards are now above average and progress is outstanding.

The school's specialist Humanities and Media Arts status is having a positive impact on achievement, and on students' personal development and preparation for future employment. Cross-curricular projects, such as 'Elizabethan England', encourage creativity and independent learning. Collaboration with local primary schools builds strong relationships and eases pupils' transition to secondary school. Mayfield's media arts students benefit from opportunities to film and record activities ranging from conferences to the landscaping of an outdoor drama area.

Teaching and learning are priorities in all decision-making. Written policies grow out of consultation and negotiation, usually involving students. There is a well-structured programme of continuing professional development and performance management. The current focus is on combining encouragement with specific and personalised guidance on how to improve when teachers are marking work and giving feedback to students. There is much excellent practice but those leading the process recognise that it has yet to be consistently embedded. 'It's a mind-set issue,' commented one of the school's professional tutors. Nonetheless, the school's own monitoring of teaching and the feedback from students indicate that teaching is good overall and outstanding in the sixth form. Students are keen to learn and the progress they make in lessons is enhanced by additional guidance from tutors, mentors and intervention support assistants. A fine network of guidance and care ensures that students have choices and challenges that match their individual capabilities and ambitions. 'Learning conversations', in which they discuss their progress and review targets with a tutor or learning mentor, make a positive contribution to students' outstanding personal development and well-being. Liaison

with students' previous schools, where possible, and a variety of assessment lead to well-pitched target setting. Good use of data quickly identifies under-achievement. Booster classes, one-to-one support from trained intervention assistants, small-group work and regularly reviewed individual learning plans are amongst the school's effective interventions. Those students identified as gifted and talented clearly enjoy the challenge of accelerated programmes of study that allow time for enrichment courses such as GCSE Astronomy. Much is done very successfully with mixed ability groups but, on occasion, a 'whole class' approach has some students struggling to keep up or others not fully stretched. Subject leaders acknowledge that planning and schemes of work need further development for Years 7-9 to ensure that the most able within mainstream groups are fully engaged and extended. This is being tackled.

The school works extremely well with external agencies and other institutions to ensure specialised support where appropriate and to extend students' options. Students feel safe, confident that problems will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Proper child protection procedures are well established. Although there were a few expressions of concern about standards of behaviour amongst parents' overwhelmingly positive responses to the inspection survey, behaviour is excellent.

Students understand the importance of exercise and a healthy lifestyle. However, whilst healthy meals are available in the school, students admit that they do not always make healthy choices. The clubs and activities offered, including team and individual sports, are very popular, with opportunities to match most interests and aptitudes. Students welcome opportunities to make a positive contribution. 'Take the buddy scheme,' a Year 9 girl explained. 'Everyone can be involved and it's a good way to help late joiners.' The Full Extended School Service not only supports Mayfield's own students, for example through the breakfast and homework clubs, but also offers well-supported opportunities for community involvement.

The school's inclusive and tolerant culture, the opportunities and achievements enjoyed by its students and its all-pervasive air of buoyant confidence are in large measure due to the energetic and persuasive leadership of the headteacher and his small senior team. Challenging targets are used very well to drive improvements in teaching and learning and so raise standards. There is an enthusiastically led system of performance management, complemented by mentoring and professional development. This has contributed towards greater stability in the staffing and ensured that newly qualified teachers feel confident and well supported. Leadership and management are good overall, and outstanding in the sixth form. Lines of accountability are clear, with considerable scope for departments to develop their own strategies for teaching and learning, knowing that these will be judged by their impact on students' achievement. Most middle management is very effective, successfully implementing priorities collaboratively developed with the senior leadership. However, there is evidence that inefficiently managed resources and the lack of a cohesive departmental plan have on occasion adversely affected teaching and learning in mathematics. Students' views and suggestions are treated seriously and have influenced major aspects of the school's development, such as curriculum design, uniform, codes of behaviour, sanctions and rewards. The success of this approach is evident in the sense of shared purpose and the mutual respect that bind this very diverse community together. The governing body is strongly led and well informed. It makes an outstanding contribution to the continuing improvement of the school in its role as critical friend.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding. Levels of attainment are above average, and achievement outstanding, as is evident in steadily improving results over the last five years. The broad curriculum and wide variety of courses on offer, both academic and vocational, cater very successfully for all abilities and aspirations. Everyone is given the opportunity to excel. Students value the range of activities available, such as debating, dance, community service, football coaching and 'Let's Make a Movie'. Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers take the time to probe and question students' understanding and have secure subject knowledge. Students have excellent support and guidance for the transition from Year 11 to 12 and recruitment into the sixth form is strong, including a significant proportion of high achievers. Retention is good and 97% of recent leavers went on to university. An exemplary 'target setting' system enables students to question staff and discuss their own individual concerns on a one-to-one basis. They speak enthusiastically about their 'learning conversations' and how these help them to make important decisions about their future with confidence.

Students praise the school highly, especially their teachers and the assistant headteacher with responsibility for the sixth form. Inspection evidence supports their comments. One said, 'Our head of sixth form is amazing; we can always go to her when we need to.' In the words of another, 'Teaching quality here is superb. The teachers are very friendly and approachable and are always there for us.' This results in mature, well rounded and responsible young people who have great confidence in their own abilities and who are delighted to act as role models and mentors to younger pupils. Personal development and well-being are excellent because students receive outstanding care, guidance and support. They say that they have a real influence on decision-making in the school. For example, they now have a student union after presenting a full constitution to the headteacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that best practice in middle management is embedded and monitored across all departments.
- Achieve consistency of good practice in teaching and assessment to challenge and support students of all abilities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2	1
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?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
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	1
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	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?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
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?	2	1
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	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Mayfield School, Dagenham, RM8 1XE

As you know, we visited your school recently to see how well it is helping you to fulfil your potential. Thank you for your courtesy and the openness with which you answered our questions and talked about your experiences at Mayfield.

We think that Mayfield is a good and improving school with many outstanding strengths. Amongst these are the sixth form, the care, guidance and support you are given and the excellent progress you make. The pride you take in the way your school has improved over the past few years is well justified. We were impressed by your confidence and the respect you show each other; you set a fine example of how people from many different cultures and backgrounds can work together to create a lively and attractive community. It was clear that your views are taken seriously and that you play an important part in the school's decision-making.

We have suggested that departments should share their good practice so that successful approaches to teaching and assessment are spread right across the school, including how best to use the available resources.

You can play your part by ensuring that you set yourself high standards and by working hard to achieve them.

I wish you continuing success.

Patricia Metham

HMI