

Chingford Foundation School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103108
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	308224
Inspection date	31 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Wiola Hola 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	1380
6th form	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Ian Terrell
Headteacher	Mr Mark Morrall
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Nevin Drive Chingford London E4 7LT
Telephone number	020 8529 1853
Fax number	020 8506 3875

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues in both the main school and the sixth form: achievement and standards; aspects of the curriculum, care, guidance and support and elements of leadership and management. Inspectors also checked briefly on pupils' personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation form (SEF); national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; curriculum and planning documents; observation of the school at work in lessons and at break times; discussions with staff, students and two members of the governing body; and from the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, and inspectors took account of the school's own assessments, which were largely justified, when reaching their judgements.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Roughly 70% of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average but no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average but the percentage with statements of special educational needs is above average. Pupils' attainment on entry varies from year to year and is slightly above average overall. A new headteacher took up post in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Chingford Foundation School has some good features. It is a popular school and most parents and pupils speak positively of what it offers and enables pupils to achieve. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall and the school has good capacity for further improvement. Staff and pupils enjoy working in this school where relationships are strong and where pupils feel safe and supported. There are some good aspects of pupils' achievement over Years 7 to 11 but also a main area of relative weakness; achievement is therefore satisfactory overall. Pupils achieve particularly well in English but not nearly as well in mathematics. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and of some lower attainers is good because of the very effective support they receive.

Standards are above average by the end of Year 11 and show a clearly rising trend over the last several years. In both 2006 and 2007, all pupils in Y11 got at least one GCSE qualification and, in 2006, all got at least five. Standards at the end of Year 9 were average in 2006 but declined significantly in 2007 and especially in mathematics and science. This decline was due in part to staffing difficulties, not all of which have been resolved in mathematics. In the sixth form, standards are just above average overall.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils generally enjoy their education and want to succeed. They work well in groups or teams when required. Behaviour is good although occasionally it can be disruptive in lessons particularly when activities set are not engaging. Attendance is above average and there have been no permanent exclusions since 2000. Pupils are prepared well for their next stages in education and life beyond that. They have some opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community, through the school council and in fund raising for charity, for example, but these are not extensive.

There are some strengths in teaching and learning but also inconsistencies and some shortcomings; pupils and parents comment on these with justification. In the main, pupils settle quickly, are properly equipped and want to learn. Lessons are planned thoroughly. Most comprise interesting activities and varied learning styles, presented with teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. Teachers' skills in posing questions to pupils to determine the extent of their understanding is very variable, as are the setting and marking of homework. Shortcomings are evident in some mathematics lessons, primarily in the devising of relevant activities that sustain interest and cover both technical skills and their applications. The care with which pupils look after their written work is variable: the quality of presentation ranges from scrappy to highly polished.

The curriculum is good and matches pupils' needs although the offer of vocational courses is still limited. Provision for vulnerable pupils, looked after children, and for those with learning difficulties or disabilities is very good. Specific provision for pupils who are gifted or talented has not yet developed to the same extent. The way in which information and communication technology (ICT) is used and taught across the school has improved but more remains to be done here. The school provides an extremely good range of enrichment activities. Pupils praise these. Aspects of care and support are outstanding, especially for vulnerable children. Pastoral care for all students is good. The school works effectively with those who fail elsewhere. Transition from primary schools is good although curriculum links are limited. The quality of academic guidance, in relation to what and how to improve, is varied; support for potential underachievers is good, and advice to pupils and students in English is excellent. The use

teachers make of attainment data to support learning is inconsistent. The school has some very effective systems for keeping pupils safe but not all arrangements for this are fully in place.

Leadership and management, including governance have some good features. The drive towards excellence is clear and the school as a whole has identified the right priorities to work on. In addition to raising standards in GCSE examinations, the school has improved accommodation and facilities for learning. Staff speak positively of the changes in management structures that support their work. Some elements of whole-school and departmental self-evaluation are already robust but the overall process is not comprehensive enough yet. The school is very inclusive and works effectively in its aim to ensure that all pupils are provided with the right conditions and support for learning. Target setting at the school is based on sound principles but does not always include sufficient challenge.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Standards are a little above average and improving. Roughly 40% of students stay on into the sixth form after Year 11 and students join from elsewhere. Entry requirements to sixth form are quite high. Achievement is satisfactory overall but varies significantly between subjects. Retention rates are good. There is a broad academic curriculum, with a small number of vocational A-levels. There is no provision for Level 2 courses. However, for the students in this sixth form, the curriculum is good, with some good extra-curricular provision in sports and enterprise. Students speak positively about provision for ICT. Students take pride in their work, have very positive attitudes and a high opinion of this school. They appreciate the smaller classes and, when given the opportunity, enjoy working in groups. Their capacity for future economic well-being is good. The extent of students' contribution to the life of the school and wider community, however, is limited. The quality of teaching and learning mirrors that of main school. There is some outstanding practice, as seen in English, but also some mundane work. Students are supported well in becoming independent learners. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good with particular strengths in the checking of students' academic progress, and in the good advice on choosing courses and preparing for university.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in mathematics.
- Ensure that more lessons are of the quality of the best; develop further some teachers' skills in questioning pupils, in providing challenging and engaging classwork and homework; ensure pupils have a greater understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Strengthen further management process for keeping the school under review and acting on review findings.

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.

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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?	3	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	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	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
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	3
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?	3	3

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	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	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No	No
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Chingford Foundation School, London, E4 7LT

Thank you for the welcome we received on our recent visit to your school. We appreciate the conversations we had with some of you, including some members of the School Council. I would like to tell you about our findings.

The school has some good features and you spoke about these with pride. You feel safe and well supported. You enjoy most lessons, particularly when activities are interesting, varied and teachers show and share their enthusiasm. We share your views about the fact that behaviour is good other than occasionally in lessons when tasks lack interest. You also appreciate the many enrichment activities provided, especially in sport, but also in clubs, trips and visits. We agree with you that facilities are mostly good; your new sports hall is splendid but the canteen is indeed tight.

Standards in the school are above average. Progress varies from subject to subject. It is particularly good in English but, in mathematics, progress has not been so good. Those of you who have learning difficulties or disabilities, or other special needs, make good progress. You develop your personal qualities well and we found that you are polite, support and encourage each other, work well in teams, and understand how to lead healthy lives. We agree that the school is good at supporting you personally. The advice you are given about how to improve your work varies in different parts of the school. In English lessons, it is made very clear to you how well you are doing and what your targets are. This is not always the case elsewhere. You and your parents feel that the amount of homework you get varies greatly from too much for some pupils to very little for others. We also noticed that some of your work is presented extremely well, but, in places, it is done with too little care.

Your new headteacher and the staff and governors are ambitious for the school and know what is going well and what can be improved further. The school has improved well in the last several years: standards have risen, and provision and facilities have been enhanced. The school has some good systems for keeping things under review but we have asked it to strengthen them to make sure that all procedures and improvements are identified and undertaken thoroughly. We have also asked the school to ensure that standards and achievements are raised in mathematics and that more lessons are of the quality of the best.

I wish you all the very best for your time at school and in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Wiola Hola

Her Majesty's Inspector