

Anglo-European School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115358
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311925
Inspection dates	21–22 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Jones

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	1317
6th form	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Johnson
Headteacher	Mr David Barrs and Mrs J Martin (co-headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2004
School address	Willow Green Ingatestone Essex CM4 0DJ
Telephone number	01277 354018
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Anglo-European School is a mixed comprehensive school in Ingatestone, near Chelmsford, Essex. It has more than 1300 pupils on roll including a sixth form of 266 students. It is a specialist language college, which draws its pupils from a wide area of Essex and from Greater London. The school is significantly oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is relatively low. Students come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, though most are of White British or European heritage. The school has some pupils from Africa, South America, Asia, China and the Indian sub-continent. A minority of students speak English as an additional language, but few are at an early stage of learning English. The majority of students start at the school with standards that are above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Anglo-European School is a good school, really well liked by students and parents and has a distinctive international character. The curriculum and personal development are outstanding, owing much to the ambitious international dimension of the school's work. Achievement and standards are good, but do not match curriculum and personal development in quality because not all teaching and academic guidance and support is as sharp as the best practice in the school. The school is led successfully by two co-headteachers. The extended leadership team is relatively new but aware of the school's strengths and working effectively to improve on its weaknesses.

Students are conscientious learners who achieve well, and standards are significantly above average. The emphasis the school gives to personal development, particularly through its focus on international links. This has an exceptional impact on its students, who are confident, articulate and aware of their responsibilities to both the school community and the wider community. The school cares for its students well, and has secure systems of pastoral support and safeguarding. Students feel secure at the school, and the school's curriculum ensures that they are effectively conscious of the need to stay safe and live healthy life-styles. There is an excellent sixth form, which is highly successful in promoting the school's international vision through its International Baccalaureate programme. The school's international links, its sixth form provision and its work experience programme give students a good start in developing skills for higher education and the work place.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum in which its specialist language college status plays an important part. Students are able to acquire skills in a wide and developing range of European and world languages, including Japanese, Mandarin and Russian. An exceptional range of international initiatives ensures that each year large numbers of students travel abroad to participate in visits and school exchange programmes. Students and their families also play host to large numbers of foreign students in return. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches students' experience and enjoyment of learning.

Teaching is good overall, and sometimes outstanding, although there is also teaching which is satisfactory. The good teaching is lively and exciting, and sets really challenging targets that encourage the students to be fully involved in their learning. This good teaching helps the students to enjoy their lessons and to make good progress. There is a small proportion of teaching which does not make the most of students' aptitudes and does not keep them well enough informed about their progress. The school recognises this weaker teaching, and has put in place the necessary structures and training to improve it, which are beginning to have an impact.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity to continue this improvement. Leadership and management are good. The co-headteachers know their school well and have been effective in establishing management systems designed to promote improvement. The newly established senior team provides good links with middle managers, and promote systems for the analysis of student performance, but these are not yet applied effectively across all departments. The governing body has given extremely good support to the school through a difficult period and it meets its responsibilities in full.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding. Emphasis on international matters enriches learning and makes the sixth form very distinctive. Over two-thirds of students progress to the sixth form where they select from a good range of International Baccalaureate, academic GCE and applied GCE courses. Standards and achievement are outstanding, reflecting excellent teaching and learning. The strong emphasis on international matters and the International Baccalaureate course greatly enriches learning in the sixth form. The examination results obtained by students on the International Baccalaureate course are very high. Lessons are challenging and require students to work independently. Personal development and extra-curricular activities are outstanding. Students enjoy their education very much and this is reflected in the good retention rates. They mature very well during their time in the sixth form and have a mature and meticulous approach to learning. The development of students' international economic, business and commercial awareness are very good; a significant number of students work and learn in other European countries. The A level programme is also well taught, with all students involved in the study of at least one language. The new director of studies and the senior staff provide outstanding leadership of the sixth form and good capacity to improve. The sixth form is managed very well on a day-to-day basis and students' progress is monitored well. The sixth form offers good value for money. Most students continue their education at universities after leaving school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the development of high quality teaching to further promote pace, excitement and student involvement in learning across the school.
- Monitor students' achievement and progress more consistently to improve planning and raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well. Standards are significantly above average, maintaining the pattern seen in recent years. The school sets challenging targets for students' attainment and progress, with clearly defined learning goals for 2008 and 2009. Particularly good progress is made in the wide range of modern foreign languages offered by the school.

Students start at the school with above average standards. They achieve well in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9, standards are significantly above average overall although lower in mathematics and science than in English. Unusually, in Years 7 to 9, boys make slightly better progress than girls. By the end of Year 11, students have made progress which is above expectation, and standards are significantly above average, with the percentage of students attaining 5 A* to C grade passes in GCSE examinations exceeding that found nationally. Whilst this percentage has diminished very slightly over the last two years, school records indicate that students currently in Year 11 are on course to achieve well this academic year.

In addition to English, mathematics and modern foreign languages, standards in science and religious education are significantly above average. Relatively weaker attainment in a small

number of subjects is recognised by the school. Close monitoring and support by senior staff is resulting in indications of improvement in these subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students are enthusiastic about their school, and feel that it meets their needs very well. They are confident, articulate, conscientious, courteous, and friendly to others. Students at the school have family links with many national and ethnic groups, and the international outlook of the school ensures a high degree of racial harmony. Exclusions are rare and attendance is outstanding, reflecting students' attitudes to the school and the strong support of parents. Students say they can always turn to someone to help them if they have worries about school. They enjoy their learning and the vast majority behave well in lessons. The school is aware of the concerns expressed by a small minority of parents about the behaviour of students during travel to and from school, and has liaised with transport providers to address the issue.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Students think about ideas, actions and their consequences, for example, through an outstanding citizenship programme. There is a very strong sense of community within the school, promoted through carefully fostered relationships between year groups, the Eco Council and Student Voice. Community links, especially with the international community, are outstanding, as is the outreach programme. Students are well aware of their responsibilities to the wider community and raise substantial sums for charity. The overseas exchange and visit programme makes an outstanding contribution to students' confidence, social skills and understanding of other cultures. Students willingly take responsibility and work well with others. Older students are very supportive of younger ones in a wide variety of ways. Many students gain confidence and new skills through involvement in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, overseas visits and the sports and languages programmes with primary schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning are good overall. Sound teachers' subject knowledge, good relationships with students and an effective range of teaching methods enhance teaching. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly since the last inspection reflecting the improvements to staffing and resources. In most lessons, the work is challenging and teachers encourage students to learn independently. The use of questions in lessons is generally effective. A small number of lessons start slowly, lack pace and depend too much on the teacher talking to the class, and do not always do enough to get the pupils actively involved in their learning. The learning needs of students are identified early and, for the most part, well. The provision made for different groups is effective and a priority for the school is to ensure that this continues to improve. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well. A good alternative education programme is provided for the small number of vocationally orientated students in Years 10 and 11.

Senior staff frequently observe lessons and, where teaching is weaker, support for improvement is provided. There are examples of good practice in assessment in many subject areas. Students' work is regularly marked and commented upon well. Teaching assistants are effective in lessons. The school works closely with parents, and parents' evenings are always well attended.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and fully supports the positive ethos of the school. It provides very effectively for the needs of its pupils, placing a strong emphasis on their personal development through its outstanding provision for languages. Students benefit greatly from the school's status as a specialist language college. All students study two modern foreign languages except for a small number who only study one. They are able to choose from a wide range, which includes Russian, Mandarin and Japanese as well as European languages. The school is broadening the range of curriculum opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11 by offering improved vocational pathways. Provision for students who experience learning difficulties is good and so they achieve well.

An international dimension and theme of global citizenship feature strongly across different subjects and form a very valuable part of the curriculum. Excellent programmes for personal, social, health education and citizenship make a positive contribution to students' personal development and are key factors in promoting their awareness of the local and broader community. Students enjoy an excellent range of well-established links with schools abroad, with a very high proportion of them taking part in overseas educational visits and exchanges. The curriculum is enhanced by an exceptional range of additional activities, including well-attended clubs in a wide range of interests, including sport and music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support are good. The school cares well for its students. The school has recently integrated its systems for pastoral and academic support of students, and this is beginning to have a positive effect. Secure systems are in place to ensure equality of opportunity for all students. Good attention is paid to detail in relation to students' safety, within the school and exceptionally so on international exchange visits. Students feel that they have a say in the running of the school through the school council.

Students are well aware of their target grades in most subjects and know what they have to do to improve. In a few subjects, marking and assessment are not good enough to help students to progress. Students with learning difficulties are well catered for through good in-class support and withdrawn for work targeted specifically at meeting their learning needs. The school gives good, focused help to students for whom English is not their first language. The school provides its students with good quality advice and guidance about courses at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The co-headteachers know and evaluate the school well and articulate a strong vision for the school. They have put targets in place that are challenging and meet the needs and aspirations of the school community. They have played a very effective role in developing systems of management designed to promote improvement and meet the aims of the school. The headteachers are supported well by a strong and increasingly effective senior leadership team, which has established effective links with middle managers. Well-designed systems for the analysis of pupil's performance are in place, but these have not been adopted by all middle managers and are not yet fully effective. The school is generally well resourced and accommodation is satisfactory. The school's implementation of its specialist college status is innovative in the way it provides for students' personal development and prepares them for the future. The governing body, which has given effective support over recent years, and which discharges its responsibilities in full, serves the school excellently. The headteachers and senior leadership team provide a clear focus and a positive lead to the whole staff, and the school has good capacity to improve further. Financial management is good and the school provides good value for money.

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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?	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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	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	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
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	1	

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?	2	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	2	
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	2	
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

23 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Anglo-European School, Ingatestone, Essex CM4 0DJ

Thank you for being helpful and courteous to us during the recent inspection of your school.

In our judgement, Anglo-European School is a good school with a distinctive character and some outstanding features. We found that it has an excellent sixth form.

The very wide range of subjects and activities and the outstanding international links help you to develop confidence, and give you a very good awareness of the world you live in. You make good progress in your studies and the standards you achieve are above average. You told us that you really like your school and that your teachers are very helpful and give you good support - we agree with your view. Your school is led and managed effectively, and improving well.

We found that most of the teaching is good, enabling you to undertake interesting work which helps you to learn quickly. Not all the teaching is as good as this though, and we have asked the school to put this right. The school has set up some good systems to record how well you are doing in school, but these are not used as well as they could be yet. We have asked that this be improved, so that everyone knows how well you are doing and what you must do to improve in all subjects.

Once again, thank you for welcoming us into your school, and we wish you well for the future.

With best wishes

Peter Jones Lead inspector