

Elthorne Park High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131310
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	315778
Inspection dates	8–9 October 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	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	898
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Margaret Majumdar
Headteacher	Mr Mohamed Sabur
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2004
School address	Westlea Road Hanwell London W7 2AH
Telephone number	020 8566 1166
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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

Elthorne Park High is an average sized, popular, 11-16, mixed school. Established in 1998 to cater for an increased demand in school places; this year it celebrates its 10th anniversary.

At over a fifth, the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. Just under half of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, this is well above average. A wide cultural mix is present in the school; predominant minority groups are of Black African, Black Caribbean, Indian or Pakistani heritage. Approximately a quarter of students speak English as an additional language. The overall proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, predominantly dyslexia, behavioural and emotional needs. However, the proportion with a statement of educational need is nearly twice the national average.

The school was awarded specialist status in mathematics and computing in September 2007. It has a Sportsmark award and Healthy schools status. A sixth form will be established in 2009 and there are plans to expand the school and rebuild in 2010.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Elthorne Park School is a good school. The headteacher, along with his senior leaders, has established a clear vision that is shared by all. A strong community spirit is apparent in this inclusive, cohesive school. Staff have high aspirations for their students and an emphatic focus on raising standards further, which contributed to the substantially improved results in 2008, both at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. As a parent reported to inspectors, 'The school has worked hard and this has shown in the results and pupils' development.'

Students enter the school with standards that are broadly average. They make good progress so, by the time they leave school in Year 11, they achieve above average standards. Progress is particularly good in English and mathematics. Decisive action in subject areas, such as science, where progress had not been as good, contributed to the significant improvement seen in 2008. This included much better tracking of the progress students were making so that support was provided in a timely manner. Year leaders played a significant role in this, ensuring underachieving students and those who needed extra support were rigorously targeted through mentoring and catch-up sessions. Senior leaders recognise that a small number of students do not make the progress they are capable of and are taking appropriate action to ensure they do so. All of this gives the school good capacity for continued improvement.

Teaching is good overall and there is some outstanding teaching in the school. In these lessons teachers are creative, ensure activities engage all learners and make good use of information and communication technology (ICT). A particular strength is the very good subject knowledge teachers have. A greater focus on developing literacy, particularly in science, has had a significant impact on students' achievement. Increasingly teachers are ensuring that work is matched to the differing needs of students in their lessons. However, this practice is not yet fully consistent. In addition, in a few lessons teachers do not always build opportunities to develop students' independent learning skills.

Middle leaders are very positive about the support and challenge provided by senior leaders. Systems to check the work of middle leaders are strong and bringing about a greater consistency and a more systematic approach to how middle leaders evaluate the quality of work in their areas. This includes looking at teachers' marking as well as ascertaining students' views. However, the quality of evaluation undertaken by middle leaders is not of an equally high standard across subjects.

A strength of this school is its highly inclusive community. Positive relationships are apparent between students and teachers, and amongst students. They feel safe in this environment and are confident about supporting their peers if they see any bullying taking place and feel sure that teachers will always deal with any reported matters. Good care, guidance and support are provided to students by all staff. Senior leaders are quick to respond to the differing needs of students, and work well with a range of external agencies to ensure appropriate support is available. This results in students who are thoughtful, articulate and confident. They make outstanding contribution to their communities, both locally and internationally through some innovative and well thought out links with a number of countries. This includes links in Jamaica to reflect the school's specialism in mathematics. A further example of this is the quiet garden students developed after successfully gaining funds from the Youth Opportunity Fund. Behaviour is good overall. However, a small minority of students disrupt the learning of others and are not always fully engaged in lessons. Students appreciate the variety of activities that are on

offer and participation rates are high. A strengthened programme in tutor periods, as well as citizenship, and beliefs and values lessons, contribute to their strong sense of right and wrong and their appreciation of their roles in society as active, engaged citizens. This contributes very effectively to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, which is outstanding.

The school's specialism, awarded last year, is well led and has had a good impact. It has contributed to broadening the curriculum and creating additional opportunities for students. This includes links with a local secondary school enabling higher attaining students to have masterclasses in mathematics. Standards in the specialist subjects are high.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. Senior leaders have developed a range of opportunities to involve parents in the life of the school and they feel welcomed in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teaching consistently develops students' independence in learning and promotes their engagement in lessons.
- Develop consistency in the rigour of middle leaders' self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students enter the school with standards that are broadly average. They make good progress to reach above average standards by the end of Key Stage 3.

In 2007 standards across different subjects in Key Stage 4, although broadly average overall, were variable. A more rigorous focus on the progress students are expected to make as well as regular tracking has had a positive impact. Unvalidated 2008 data shows standards increased significantly in Key Stage 4 and are above average. The proportion of students achieving five good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, is well above the national average and contributes well to students' future economic well-being. Standards in food technology and graphics are not as high and are an area of focus for senior leaders this year. Overall, students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress during their time in school.

There are a small number of students who are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Intensive support ensures that they too make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Students' contribution to their community and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Students demonstrate the school's commitment to shared values through the positive relationships they develop with peers and adults. The care and guidance provided by the Key Stage 4 prefects is a strength of the school, and demonstrates students' good social and emotional understanding.

The school effectively uses assemblies and themed tutor sessions to raise awareness of moral issues and celebrate diversity. Students confidently explain the importance of learning about other cultures and speak very positively about the school's international links. They welcome the range of opportunities for travelling abroad, particularly as part of the activities week. Students enjoy coming to school, as is shown by their good attendance. Behaviour around the

school and in lessons is good and students display positive attitudes towards each other and adults. They feel safe in the school and articulate well-considered opinions on this issue. In a tutor period, students argued very maturely the costs and benefits of surveillance systems that are employed to keep them safe.

Although high, exclusion rates are declining and senior leaders are taking action to address the needs of students at risk of exclusions through a range of planned interventions. The school council effectively involves students in the decision making process and most students feel this is a good platform to affect change, although some older students feel their concerns are not always addressed. Students are regularly involved in a range of extensive fund raising activities which support local charities as well as national and international ones.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good overall. A very positive feature of the teaching and learning is the good relationships that are apparent between teachers and students. In the best lessons this results in students feeling encouraged to take risk, explore new ideas and concepts with confidence and results in higher levels of understanding.

Teachers use a range of activities, including group work, ICT and games, to engage students in learning. Teachers are also skilled in consolidating learning at the end of lessons. Good use is made of assessment systems to identify gaps in students' knowledge and there is a strong emphasis throughout the school on students' rates of progress, which has raised their expectations. Students are fully aware of their targets and they know what they need to do to improve. The school's specialist status has greatly improved facilities and a good proportion of teaching takes full advantage of specialist equipment such as interactive whiteboards.

A small number of lessons are overly led by teachers and students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to work independently. In these lessons, teachers' questioning does not challenge all students or ensure they are all participating in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of the majority of students. In Key Stage 4, there is a good range of subjects which students can choose to study. Some students take up the vocational courses available; however, a wider range of courses, although offered by the school, was not run due to insufficient demand. The specialist school status has increased the range of ICT courses and good links with local secondary schools has further enhanced opportunities for students to experience a broader curriculum, such as A-level mathematics.

In Years 7 and 8 there is an innovative and exciting programme promoting community enrichment. This enables students the opportunity to, amongst other things, study Japanese, take part in ensemble singing and learn about philosophy. In planning for the new sixth form the school will offer the International Baccalaureate which will in part build upon this community enrichment programme. The citizenship programme is strong and provides a wide range of opportunities for students to understand and enact their roles as active citizens.

An extensive programme of enrichment opportunities help to widen students' experiences and include a good number of sports and music clubs and the Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme. In addition, the school arranges a range of educational visits, which include visits to Germany, France and Spain. The range of international links, such as with China, Jamaica and Cuba, provide further opportunities for students to develop their international awareness, understand similarities and differences between other cultures and within their own cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and enhanced by the good links with a range of external agencies and with parents. The pastoral care and guidance provided by Year leaders is a strength of the school and supports students' well-being because it is timely and effective. One parent reported to inspectors, 'Year leaders are quick to get in touch with us whenever there are concerns.' They use progress information about individual students very effectively to drive up standards and promote achievement. They are also diligent in the work that they do to support vulnerable students such as those at risk of exclusion.

There is a high level of commitment to identifying any aspect of risk in students' experience in the school. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students comply with national guidelines, and health and safety systems are carefully managed. Students themselves are encouraged to assess the part that the school plays in all aspects of the Every Child Matters agenda through a well-planned tutorial programme.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides leadership that is both challenging and clearly focused on improving standards, while maintaining an inclusive and caring ethos in the school. His vision for the school is shared by colleagues and governors. Staff speak with great affection for the school and are committed to further improvement. They are very supportive of each other and work well as a team. The headteacher is ably supported by his senior team and together they have taken significant action to ensure improvements.

Strong systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are in place with the result that senior staff have a good understanding of their relative strengths and weaknesses. All are held firmly accountable for the achievement of their students. There are some very effective middle leaders who, through rigorous and precise evaluation, maintain high standards. However, not all are as effective and a few lack rigour in how they monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders provide good support to middle leaders in order to improve their effectiveness and this is having an impact in promoting greater consistency.

Governors are highly committed and supportive. They have been actively involved in the planning for school improvement as well as the strategic development of the school.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding. The school is very successful at providing students with a local and global perspective through its enriched citizenship curriculum. Senior leaders have a good understanding of their school and local community and provide support accordingly. An example of this is the numeracy and ICT support provided by

the school to a local church to broaden provision for those who speak English as an additional language, benefiting particularly the Polish community.

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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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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
The extent to which 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	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 learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

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

21 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Elthorne Park High School, London, W7 2AH

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you for your welcome and the help you provided to us during the inspection. We valued the discussions we had with you and I would like to take this opportunity to share our findings with you.

Elthorne Park High is a good school. We were impressed with how well you all get on with each other, how supportive you are of each other and how well you contribute to your community. We found this aspect of the school's work to be excellent. The standard of teaching you receive is good overall, some is outstanding, and this enables you to make good progress. We agree with you that not all teaching is as good as the best in the school, and we have asked senior leaders to make sure that it becomes so.

Your headteacher, with his senior leaders, provide good leadership. They have put in place strong systems to make sure they know what is happening in the school and, as a result, they know the school well and are able to take the right actions to promote improvement. This was seen in the significant improvement in results in 2008. The proportion of students who achieve five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics is well above average. Subject leaders and Year leaders also work hard to support you. Most of them have very good systems to identify what works well and what needs improvement and we have asked senior leaders to ensure that all are as effective as the best in the school.

The curriculum, teaching, support and guidance provided by staff in your school helps you to become articulate, confident and thoughtful young people; these are important qualities. We were impressed with the range of activities you are involved in which support your communities and develops your understanding of your roles as citizens in the 21st century. Well done and keep it up.

I wish you and your school continued success.

Yours sincerely

Asyia Kazmi

Her Majesty's Inspector