

Bethnal Green Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100971
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	323386
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Thomas Gibson

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	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	790
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Lesley Pavitt
Headteacher	Mr Mark Keary
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, including three joint observations, and held meetings with governors, staff, and parents. They observed the school's work, scrutinised samples of students' work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, its monitoring of students' progress towards targets, school policies, the school improvement plan, case studies of vulnerable students, minutes of governing body meetings and the local authority school improvement partner reports. They also considered responses to questionnaires completed by students, staff, and 18 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following aspects.

- Is the school able to demonstrate that improvements in GCSE results in 2009 are likely to be sustained in 2010?
- How effectively are senior leaders and managers dealing with the challenges of large numbers of students leaving and joining during the academic year?
- How consistently effective is teaching and the use of assessment in ensuring that all learners, including higher-ability students, are challenged?
- Has the school successfully addressed the relative historical underachievement of Bangladeshi boys?
- What improvements have been made since the last inspection to support the school's own assessment of good capacity to improve?

Information about the school

Bethnal Green Technology College is a smaller than average secondary school. A large majority of the students are boys. The school serves a community subject to high levels of social deprivation. Almost all students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. About half are of Asian or British/Asian origin and about a tenth are from Black or Black/British African heritage. The first language for a large majority of students is not English, but only a minority are at the early stages of learning English. A substantial number of students join the school between Year 8 and Year 11. The school has specialist status in technology. It is currently in temporary accommodation as part of a major building programme.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bethnal Green is an inclusive school which is continuing to improve. The relentless energy and drive of the headteacher ensured that, despite a major rebuilding programme, there was an improvement in examination results in 2009. The school leaders have embedded ambitious expectations for the school, based on detailed knowledge of the progress of individual students of all backgrounds. The school has a good capacity to improve further. School leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have taken concerted action to address shortcomings. For example, work to eliminate previously weak teaching and to raise attendance has been successful. Standards rose in 2009 as a result of the systematic monitoring of the progress made by individual students. The targeted individual support of students led to an 11% rise in the number of students gaining five or more higher grades at GCSE including English and mathematics.

Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory, some good and even outstanding lessons were observed during the inspection. There remains variability across the school and within departments in the quality of teaching. There is a calm working environment in lessons. The school has an accurate understanding of the inconsistency in the quality of teaching and has in place a robust but creative system to monitor teaching and learning. The majority of students make satisfactory progress. Although attainment is average, results in English and mathematics have improved more significantly than those in science. The attainment of the high number of students who have joined the school at other than the usual time of admission was in line with overall school results.

The school has developed a curriculum that is beginning to provide appropriate pathways for all students, particularly at Key Stage 4. However, it is too early to measure the outcomes of these changes. Students, in their questionnaires and in meetings with inspectors, said they enjoyed coming to school. They are given opportunities to take responsibility through an extensive student leadership programme. This includes involvement in appointment panels and membership of the effective and well-established 'Safe' group. One senior student commented, 'This is a real community where we all belong'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching to at least 75% by September 2010 in order to raise attainment, particularly in science and for the most able students, by making effective use of the existing good and outstanding practice in the school.

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- Develop the curriculum so that, by September 2010, 40% of the Key Stage 4 curriculum is provided through applied learning provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enjoy their learning and make satisfactory progress in lessons. The school effectively monitors the learning across all curriculum areas. Although students' progress is improving in most subjects, the rate of improvement in science is not improving at a fast enough pace. The progress made by Bangladeshi students, particularly in English, is improving but remains below that of other students. Though there is good provision for more able students, in terms of leadership opportunities and early examination entry, the percentage of students gaining the highest examination grades is not as high as it could be.

Students, through their questionnaires and in meetings with inspectors, say they feel safe in the school. The buddy system, voice box and the 'Safe' group all provide effective support for students. They are confident that staff will deal effectively with any difficulty. Peer mediation and the system of restorative justice are embedded in the culture of the school. The behaviour of students is good. They are polite, friendly and courteous. The declining level of exclusion reflects the impact of the supportive structures in place. Movement of the students, whilst the school is in crowded temporary accommodation, is managed well by the staff.

Students have an understanding of how to lead a healthy life. The school is actively working towards gaining the Healthy Schools Standard. Students make a good contribution to the life of the school, through their involvement in school and year councils, in appointment panels and to the contribution to the development of teaching and learning. Students have been trained on the National College of School Leadership student leadership programme, 'Leading learning and teaching'. Year 10 citizenship lessons provide students with real opportunities to develop an in-depth understanding of the work of local charities in tackling the root causes of social issues through the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative project. Students are aware of the wider global community. For example, whilst they witness the building of their school, they are raising funds for a charity in Uganda to provide school places for children who would otherwise have no school at all. The school's involvement with the University of the First Age has contributed to the good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

During the inspection a large amount of good and better teaching was observed. However, there is too much variation within and between departments. Consequently teaching overall is satisfactory. Where teaching is most effective, students are clear about the next steps in their learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to extend understanding, and transition between activities is managed well to ensure that learning moves on at a good pace. Students make less progress when questioning is too simplistic and does not sufficiently require students to think. The quality of written feedback given to students is inconsistent. At its best, it provides them with specific guidance about how to improve their work.

The curriculum has improved, but this has not been without its challenges and setbacks. Since September 2009 a more appropriate curriculum has been provided for the students. Within the provision of the school's specialism, the technology department has introduced GCSE in Year 9 and applied learning courses in information and communication technology. The school has also introduced vocational provision in science, music and art. The more able students now have the opportunity to take examinations early, and the opportunity to study AS-level Bengali has been provided for students in Year 10. In Key Stage 3 the introduction of 'philosophy for children' and 'learning to learn' courses are impacting positively on the students' basic skills and supporting them to take ownership of their learning.

The care and guidance the students receive in the school is good. This is particularly seen in the effective support given to the high number of students who enter the school after the start of Year 7. The student 'buddy' system is a good example of this. Students

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who have not been successful in other schools have been supported well to make progress through personalised support programmes. Year 11 students, in meetings with inspectors, were able to articulate clearly their confidence in the guidance that they receive from staff. The school monitors attendance and punctuality rigorously and has put in place effective support to promote good attendance. It has been successful in significantly reducing the number of students persistently absent from school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has high expectations for its students. Tracking of students' progress is robust, systematic and effective in monitoring the impact of intervention strategies. Senior and middle leaders have a good understanding of what constitutes a good lesson. They have implemented strategies, including involving students in observations, to ensure consistently good teaching. Any weak teaching is robustly challenged. The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school and has become more strategic. Governors are beginning to offer a greater degree of critical friendship to the school.

The school strives for equality of opportunity for all students. It has pertinent information about the academic progress of different groups of students in the school. This progress information is monitored systematically, and appropriate intervention strategies are implemented if students are not achieving their target grades.

The school has developed a number of imaginative partnerships to develop the learning and well-being of students. For example, a literacy project with a local bank has contributed to developing students' literacy skills. A mentoring programme coordinated by a local legal company has helped to build the self-confidence of individual students. Not all partnerships have been so successful; for example the school has rightly ended its involvement in an applied learning course in construction.

The school has good systems in place to ensure safeguarding. The single central record is very well maintained. Staff have had appropriate child protection training and there is a good understanding of the importance of working with other support agencies.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The response to the parental questionnaire was very low. Of the responses returned, the overwhelming majority were very supportive of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bethnal Green Technology College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 790 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	56	7	38	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	35	11	65	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	58	6	36	0	0	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	44	9	50	1	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	50	8	44	0	0	1	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	53	6	35	2	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	29	11	65	1	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	31	11	69	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	50	8	44	0	0	1	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	62	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	44	8	50	0	0	1	6
The school is led and managed effectively	6	38	10	62	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	38	9	50	2	12	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Bethnal Green Technology College, Tower Hamlets, E2 6NW

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome and helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed meeting with you and talking to you in your lessons and around school. Many of you spoke very positively about your school, and older students were very clear about how they have seen the school improve since the last inspection.

The main judgement we came to is that your school is satisfactory and improving. Your headteacher and senior teachers understand how the school needs to improve further. A very distinctive aspect of the school is the importance given to your views in making plans for the future.

The most important improvement the school needs to make is to build upon the improved examination results in 2009 to ensure that you all leave school with good qualifications to support you in your future life. Inspectors saw some good and even outstanding lessons. However, we have asked the school to ensure that all lessons across all departments are at least good. You already help in lessons with your good behaviour, but to support this improvement it is important that you act upon the helpful comments that teachers make to support your learning. The school has high expectations of you. We have asked your teachers to focus on improving the progress you make in science and increasing in all subjects the number of you who achieve the very highest grades.

The variety of lessons and courses you are offered in Years 10 and 11 in particular has improved. We have asked the school to ensure that when you move into your new building, they provide an even greater variety. This will help you achieve higher examination results.

You told us how much you value the help and support you get from staff in the school. They are very committed to ensuring that each one of you achieves your potential.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Gibson

Lead Inspector

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