

Eastbrook Comprehensive School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101243
Local Authority	Barking
Inspection number	323429
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Ken Bush

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1178
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Joe Fryer
Headteacher	Ms Valerie Dennis
Date of previous school inspection	0 July 2007
School address	Dagenham Road Dagenham Essex RM10 7UR
Telephone number	020 82704567
Fax number	020 82704545
Email address	office@eastbrook.bardaglea.org.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

The inspectors visited forty lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and students. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, development plans and 426 parental questionnaires.

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

- attainment and progress in all year groups
- the quality of teaching and of assessment attendance
- the quality of provision in the sixth form and the outcomes for students.

Information about the school

In this larger than average comprehensive school most students are from a White British background with a minority from Black or Black British-African backgrounds. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is close to the national average, but increasing. Both the percentage of students eligible for free school meals and the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are above the national average. The most commonly identified of these needs relate to moderate learning and to emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is also additional provision for students with speech, language and communication needs. Eastbrook is currently part of the National Challenge programme. In recent years the school has had to deal with a variety of staffing issues and fluctuating student numbers. Some courses for 14-16 year olds are offered in partnership with other providers and vocational courses for sixth formers are offered in partnership with a further education college.

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

3

Main findings

Eastbrook provides its students with a satisfactory standard of education. There are signs of rapid improvement but recent challenging times have limited this in some key areas, notably the rate of improvement in student achievement. Care, guidance and support for students are good. An emerging strength of the school, now under its present dynamic leadership, is the quality of its self-evaluation procedures which involve a wide range of stakeholders. These procedures mean that the senior leadership team, other leaders and, increasingly, governors, know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and have robust plans in place to address areas in need of improvement. Detailed and relevant improvement planning, the success of curriculum reform and rising levels of student achievement reflect a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

The standards reached by students by the end of Year 11 are low, but improving. Whilst currently progress is satisfactory, the rate of progress over time, however, has not been fast enough. Consequently, with the exception of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, a significant proportion of students have not achieved as well as they should have done. The school has now addressed this through a more systematic and, therefore, more effective response to underperformance. This has not yet had a full impact and achievement overall remains satisfactory, but is improving.

The school provides a safe environment in which most students, including the most vulnerable, feel secure. They report that incidents of bullying do occur occasionally but that staff deal with them effectively. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory, although some instances of students being excessively boisterous were seen during the inspection both in lessons and particularly around the school campus. However, students and parents are generally in agreement that behaviour has improved significantly in the past few years which is contributing to better progress. Although there has been some recent improvement compared with previous years as a result of more intensive monitoring, the proportion of persistent absentees remains too high and the rate of overall attendance is low.

The radical restructuring of the curriculum has made the most marked contribution to the improving trend in achievement and is now one of the school's key strengths. Effective partnerships with other providers have increased the range of vocational courses significantly and many Key Stage 4 students, in particular, are now finding greater success and relevance in their learning. The standard of teaching overall has also improved since the previous inspection. There has been tangible progress made in tackling inconsistent practice across different subjects through such 'mini-inspection' strategies as 'focus weeks'. Some variation in quality persists, for example, progress dips

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when assessment data is not used well enough to challenge all pupils and in the varied pace of lessons. The best practice evident in the school is not always effectively shared, although this is now being addressed through departments being grouped into formal improvement clusters. Marking remains erratic and students do not always get enough good quality written feedback to guide them in how to improve their work and support high levels of achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement for Year 11 students so that challenging attainment and progress targets, as agreed by the governing body, are met or exceeded in the present and subsequent academic years.
- Improve the attendance of students to 93.0% by the end of the next academic year, and to 93.5% by the end of the following year. Re-engage students who are persistently absent through intensive monitoring and through making best use of support from other agencies. Reduce the percentage of students who are persistently absent from school to 6.5% by the end of this academic year, and to 5.5% by the end of the following academic year.
- Improve the consistency of good and better teaching across the school so that by the end of this academic year at least 50% of lessons should be good or better and 10% outstanding, and by the following academic year 75% to be good and 15% outstanding by:
 - effectively sharing good and outstanding practice
 - ensuring that leaders and managers monitor the use of assessment information by all teachers so that appropriately challenging work is set for all students
 - ensuring that the pace of lessons is sufficient to enable all students to make at least good progress.

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

Most students behave well in lessons, enjoy learning and are keen to do their best. When tasks are engaging, students' application is good and students persevere well in order to find success. In one Year 7 art lesson, for example, high teacher expectations and careful planning led to some outstanding achievement in portraiture. However, when activities are less engaging some students lose concentration and their behaviour can deteriorate.

In 2009, the proportion of Year 11 students gaining five good GCSEs rose significantly compared to the two previous years, although attainment overall remains low. Standards in English and science are now markedly higher and whilst there was noticeable improvement too in mathematics, there exists a legacy of underachievement in that subject because of former instabilities in staffing. Attainment is consistently high in drama and especially in art and media studies where the A* to C pass rate at GCSE is well above the national average. Although the rate of progress at the end of Key Stage

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4 has been too slow in recent years, evidence gathered during the inspection, including in lessons, showed indications that it is now increasing rapidly because of improved monitoring of teaching. As a consequence of well-focused and timely support, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other vulnerable groups make good progress.

Students make good use of the range of opportunities to contribute to the school community and to enhance their leadership skills. They show responsibility and give generously of their time in supporting charities, although they are less involved in community activity beyond the school and its immediate locality. The school's commitment to providing comprehensive work-related and vocational learning programmes is making a sound contribution to students' future economic well-being. Students respond well to the range of opportunities to engage in multi-cultural celebrations and most socialise well with students whose ethnic and religious backgrounds are different from their own. For those students with a lower than average attendance, progress slows.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

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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Teaching makes a satisfactory impact upon students' learning and achievement. In the best lessons seen during the inspection, the setting of challenging tasks involving active learning led to high levels of student engagement and rapid progress. In the less successful lessons, work was not matched sufficiently well to students' needs and capabilities, leading to poor motivation and progress slowing. Planning is usually thorough but does not always make effective use of the students' prior learning. There were relatively few examples of high level independent learning seen during the inspection. Whilst the majority of students are aware of their targets, they are not always clear about their current level of achievement or precisely what is needed to improve their work.

Eastbrook now provides a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum giving students a good foundation for achievement. Clear, strategic planning by key senior leaders has created a good range of pathways. Students are now enabled and encouraged to begin accredited courses when they are ready, which for most is in Key Stage 3. Students in Year 8 are able to exercise some guided subject choices, reflecting their needs, interests and aspirations. Provision is further enriched by 'theme days' and a good range of extra-curricular clubs at lunchtimes. The school is working towards developing its cross-curricular provision, although this is not yet fully established.

The school's good pastoral care for students through its effective tutorial system is a feature of provision highly valued by students and parents alike. One parent commented, 'We are really pleased with how quickly our daughter has settled in at Eastbrook. We feel staff make a real effort to get to know the children as individuals.' However, the use of tutorial time as seen during the inspection was too variable. The quality of information, advice and guidance is good, enabling students to make well-informed choices at transition points such as the end of Key Stage 3. Vulnerable students are especially well supported and nurtured, which allows them to make good progress and a full contribution to the life of the school. The Inclusion Centre is an important facility in successfully promoting the importance of good attendance for those students and their families in most need of intensive support.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the school with clear and effective strategic leadership and direction. She is well supported by senior leaders and governors who share a

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commitment to improve the outcomes achieved by all students. Middle leaders are becoming more proficient in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and students' progress, notably in identifying underperformance and providing appropriate intervention strategies. At present, they are less successful in sharing effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning, although this is now being addressed. There is a burgeoning sense of collaboration and a strong team ethic in evidence in the school. Progress has been made in raising the overall standard of teaching, although the significant investment in professional development in this area has yet to have a full impact on students' progress.

Inclusive practice and equal opportunities are vigorously promoted and the school exploits its extended services provision effectively to make a good contribution to community cohesion. For example, working with a local community centre, the school contributed to a community cohesion breakfast to encourage greater engagement with local senior citizens. Although governors have not yet developed their monitoring and evaluation role fully, they are making an increasingly important contribution to improvements by holding senior leaders to account for the school's performance. They have ensured, for example, that safeguarding requirements are securely in place and that policy and procedures in that area are regularly scrutinised and consistently applied.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	3

Sixth form

Attainment in the sixth form is broadly average, but improving, with some variation between subjects. Sociology, law and media studies have been consistently successful,

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whilst attainment in mathematics and science less so. This variability explains why outcomes for students are satisfactory. Students report they enjoy school and appreciate the wide range of options available to them at both intermediate and advanced levels, partly as a result of consortium arrangements and also through collaboration with other local providers. Students' contribution to the school and wider community is good with some acting as mentors for younger pupils. Students have a mature outlook, are ambitious, and are keen to do well in their studies. The proportion of Year 13 students going on to higher education has risen markedly since the previous inspection. Progression rates from AS to A2 are satisfactory, but improving.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but of an inconsistent quality across the range of the curriculum, mainly because opportunities for independent learning are insufficient. However, students feel that most of their teachers go out of their way to help and guide them in their studies. Assessment is thorough and students get effective feedback which enables them to improve in most subjects. Leadership and management in the sixth form are satisfactory, with improving systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and more effective tracking of students' progress. Progress has been made since the previous inspection in establishing a clearer long-term strategy for the development of the sixth form, although this has not yet had a full impact upon student outcomes.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the work of the school and appreciate the efforts made by the headteacher and other staff to bring about improvements. Many commented favourably on the quality of pastoral care as well as the support given to vulnerable students and those with additional needs. A few parents raised concerns about disruptive behaviour in lessons and inconsistent behaviour management by staff. Inspectors found that while there were a few instances of unsatisfactory or inconsiderate behaviour, especially at lunchtime or at lesson changeovers, behaviour overall is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eastbrook Comprehensive School 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 426 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	117	27	256	60	43	10	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	92	22	283	66	34	8	7	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	103	24	240	56	62	15	9	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	90	21	248	58	65	15	9	2
The teaching is good at this school	64	15	269	63	64	15	16	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	73	17	227	53	100	23	9	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	13	255	60	83	20	8	2
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)	66	16	271	64	35	8	8	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	15	271	64	55	8	6	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	77	18	224	53	79	18	29	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	11	250	59	71	17	16	4
The school is led and managed effectively	70	16	261	61	63	15	9	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	104	24	242	57	54	13	12	3

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.



22 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Eastbrook Comprehensive School, Dagenham RM10 7UR

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons, meeting with you and were impressed with the pride most of you have in your school. Eastbrook, including the sixth form, is a satisfactory and improving school.

These are the main findings of the inspection.

- Although the standards reached by students by the end of Year 11 are low compared to most other schools, you make satisfactory progress.
- Teaching is generally satisfactory and is improving and you have a good curriculum.
- Most of you told us that you feel safe at school and behaviour is satisfactory
- Attendance is low compared to most other schools and too many students are frequently (or persistently) absent ' this slows their progress.
- Staff at the school care for and support you well, but the guidance that you are given about how to improve your work and meet your targets is an area that should be better.
- Your school is satisfactorily led and managed and your headteacher has good plans for how it can get even better.

The headteacher agrees with the inspection team that students could achieve more at school and we have asked that:

- the standards reached by the time students leave school should be higher with a faster rate of progress made
- the level of attendance should be at least as good as most other schools and more should be done to encourage those who are persistently absent to come to school more frequently
- the proportion of good and outstanding lessons is increased so that the quality of teaching and learning and of written feedback to students is more consistent across the school.

You can do your bit to help by continuing to work as hard as you can and some of you could improve your concentration and behaviour in lessons and your attendance at school.

On behalf of the inspection team, the very best of luck with your studies in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bush

Lead Inspector

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