

Langley Park School for Girls

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101678
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	323508
Inspection date	10 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Lynes 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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School (total)	1655
Sixth form	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Moore
Headteacher	Miss Jan Sage
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2006
School address	Hawksbrook Lane South Eden Park Road Beckenham BR3 3BE
Telephone number	020 8663 4199
Fax number	020 8663 6578

Age group	11–19
Inspection date	10 February 2009
Inspection number	323508

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- achievement and standards in Year 11
- the overall effectiveness of the sixth form focusing on achievement, teaching, the curriculum and academic guidance.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and by looking at students' work and school documents. Responses from parents in their questionnaires and discussions with students and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but evidence gathered suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are accurate in nearly all respects, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Langley Park School for Girls is popular and heavily oversubscribed. It admits boys into Year 12, and they comprise about a fifth of the sixth form. It is much larger than the average secondary school, and about three quarters of students are of White British origin. The remainder are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, though few are at the early stages of learning English. About a tenth of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is lower than the national average; the largest proportion of these students have moderate learning difficulties. The school has been designated as a high-performing specialist school and as a result has four specialisms: technology, languages, sports and leading edge status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Langley Park School for Girls is outstanding in almost all aspects. The school has maintained the quality of its work since the last inspection because of a rigorous approach to self-evaluation. This enables leaders and managers to have an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher's high standards and rigorous approach to improvement ensure that there is no room for complacency. This has meant, for example, that the school responded extremely well to the relative decline in GCSE results in 2007. Consequently, the achievement of Year 11 in 2008 was outstanding and evidence from this inspection suggests that this is set to be sustained in 2009. This demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school, as evidenced by the unusually high number of positive responses to the confidential questionnaire. Almost all parents agreed that behaviour was good, their child enjoyed school and their progress was good. This is a higher degree of agreement than normally found in secondary schools, particularly to the question on behaviour. One comment that typifies the responses was, 'my daughter is thriving ... she has blossomed both intellectually and socially'. Parents also recognise the outstanding quality of leadership and management in the school with one stating that 'leadership ... delivers what it says it can achieve'.

Standards in GCSE examinations have been consistently at least well above average since the previous inspection and were exceptionally high in 2008. Data provided by the school indicate that progress across all subjects in the current Year 11 is similar to last year. Students enter Year 7 with standards that are just above average; this therefore represents outstanding progress. The school's specialisms make an important contribution to examination results and all targets for Year 11 were met or exceeded in 2008. Standards in the sixth form are more variable across subjects but are still above average, and this represents good progress. The leadership of the sixth form has recently been strengthened and the management team has a realistic view of its strengths and a good understanding of its priorities for development.

An important element of achieving the exceptionally high standards in 2008 was the robust manner in which the mathematics department responded to the 2007 dip in results. After a rigorous analysis of the reasons for the decline a range of strategies were put into place by the department. These included closer monitoring of progress and an even more careful grouping of students, which secured a significant improvement to results in 2008. This is further evidence of the excellent capacity for improvement that exists at all levels of leadership and management.

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. This confirms the school's judgement that it is good overall. For example, a trigonometry lesson in mathematics was outstanding because the teacher had excellent knowledge of the subject, kept the lesson moving at a brisk pace and knew exactly what students found challenging. As a result, the teacher was able to tailor the explanations to the students' needs and this engendered real confidence in their own mathematical ability. The good teaching observed in the sixth form was characterised by expert subject knowledge, a high level of intellectual challenge and positive relationships between teachers and students. The hallmark of these high-quality lessons was the way that students of all abilities were gaining confidence and were able to express themselves articulately.

Students, in both formal and informal discussion, spoke warmly of the help and guidance they receive in all aspects of their education. Year 11 students talked about how changes since the

last inspection had made an impact on them. For example, they believe that reports to parents have improved considerably and that they are more tailored to their individual progress. They, along with parents and staff, were involved in this process as the student council discussed the proposed changes. Year 7 students are very enthusiastic about all the after school clubs and additional opportunities. They are also very confident about finding someone to talk to if they have any concerns, and were particularly complimentary about the sixth form peer listeners.

This growth in students' personal aspects is a key feature of the school. All elements of students' personal development are outstanding because of the commitment from staff to ensure that students feel safe and enjoy school. Students told inspectors that they feel very well supported and receive a great deal of individual attention. They feel that the school does everything in its power to help them to succeed. This ensures that students develop into confident young people very well prepared for life beyond school.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school prides itself on providing an inclusive sixth form, which means that it is popular and attracts an increasingly diverse range of students. About a third join the sixth form from other schools. Students begin Year 12 with standards that are very similar to the national average. Most make good, and in some cases very good, progress and the great majority continue their studies in higher education. Students appreciate the high expectations of the school and the support that staff give them in order for these to be achieved. Those who arrive speaking English as an additional language receive excellent support both in and out of class. Students are very positive about the good quality of advice across a range of both career and higher education options. They are particularly appreciative of the guidance they receive to complete the application process for university entry. They say that the monitoring of their academic progress is very good and that there is 'no way you can fall behind'. There is a very broad range of A-level courses on offer that attracts students with high aspirations. This is enhanced by a number of enrichment opportunities that are provided both within and beyond the normal school day. Consequently, the curriculum suits the needs and ambitions of most students. Those students in the current Year 11 told inspectors that they would like to have a greater range of vocational options when they join the sixth form. The school recognises this and that it needs to develop an even broader range of alternative courses for some students to complement the existing strong provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to broaden the range of options available in the sixth form to cater for the increasingly diverse student population.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
---	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
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 learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
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	

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

02 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Langley Park School for Girls, Beckenham, BR3 3BE

Thank you for talking to inspectors so enthusiastically about your school. As you can read in the full report, which you can download from www.ofsted.gov.uk, we judged your school to be outstanding in almost every respect. The way that the school cares for you and helps you to become confident, articulate learners is particularly impressive. This enables you to achieve excellent results in your examinations in Year 11.

You told inspectors of the many positive things about your school, and you were very complimentary about the way in which staff will do anything to help you succeed. You feel involved in the school and that you can influence important aspects of it through, for example, the student council. You feel very confident that if you have any problems or concerns, there is always someone you can talk to. In particular, Year 7 students were very positive about the sixth form peer listeners.

Of course, even in an outstanding school there is always more to do to keep on improving. We agreed with the school that the sixth form could be even better. As you know, the sixth form is very popular and attracts students with a variety of different needs and interests. Sixth form students get good results in a wide range of courses. However, as Year 11 students told us, there could be an even wider range of courses available to suit the needs of everyone in the sixth form. So we have asked the school to:

- continue to provide a wider range of options in the sixth form to suit the needs and interests of all students.

I wish those of you taking examinations this year the very best of luck.

Yours faithfully

Michael Lynes

Her Majesty's Inspector