

Gaynes School Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102344
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	335883
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Robin Gaff

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	920
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Rogers
Headteacher	Bill Edgar
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 37 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning and evaluation documents, as well as reports completed by external bodies, including the local authority. The school's analysis of students' progress and attainment was scrutinised, as were a total of 58 questionnaires received from parents, 90 from students and 28 from staff.

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

- the school's success in improving students' progress, including that of boys and other underperforming groups, particularly in Key Stage 4
- the extent to which the school ensures that teaching includes sufficient opportunities for active learning
- the school's success in improving the behaviour of the small minority of students who do not meet its expectations
- how successful the school is being in promoting all aspects of community cohesion.

Information about the school

Gaynes is a slightly smaller than average secondary school. About one fifth of the students are recruited from a neighbouring local authority. There is a significantly higher proportion of boys than girls on roll. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups, and of those who speak English as an additional language, is well below average. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well below the national average. The school first gained accreditation as a specialist language college in 2002, and gained the International School award in 2008. The school has received 'Most Improved' and 'High Performance' awards in 2009 from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, as well as the Diana Award for its peer listener programme. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2007, and there is currently an acting chair of governors.

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

Gaynes School provides its students with a satisfactory standard of education. There have been significant changes of staffing in recent years, including the membership of the senior leadership team. The headteacher, well supported by his senior team and by the governors, is energetically pursuing a programme of change that has led to improvement in a number of areas.

Students consistently gain GCSE results that are above national averages, and acquire qualifications that give them a good range of options for future study and employment. The rate at which they progress from their starting points is satisfactory, and is improving strongly, particularly in their final two years at the school. This includes the progress made by boys and by students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because the school has now developed sophisticated systems for identifying students who are at risk of underachieving, and has put in place effective mechanisms to support them.

Students' behaviour around the school, and in the great majority of lessons, is good. Many students and their parents, though not all, feel that the new systems for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are working well. Most students say they enjoy coming to school, and particularly appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Levels of attendance are improving, thanks to the school's introduction of effective procedures for reducing absence. Many younger students, and their parents, say they settled in quickly when they joined the school because of the help they received from staff and from older students. Students feel safe in school, and know whom to approach if they feel concerned in any way. They have a good understanding of how to make healthy choices, and their level of participation in physical activities is high. Students benefit from many opportunities to contribute to the school and wider communities, and many of them take on positions of responsibility within the school. They gain a good understanding of life in other countries through links with the school's partners in Europe and in Cuba. Their awareness of different cultures and traditions in this country is less well developed.

Although satisfactory overall, there is some good and outstanding teaching in the school. In those lessons where students make good progress, teachers make good use of information about students' levels of attainment and preferred learning styles. They plan a range of activities well suited to students' individual needs, and include good opportunities for students to be actively involved in their own learning. Some lessons, however, proceed at too leisurely a pace, or do not include activities which fully engage and stretch all students. This limits the progress they make. Many students know their targets and what they need to do to reach them. Some have a very precise

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understanding of the steps they must take to achieve the grades of which they are capable, but others show only a vague awareness of how to improve the standard of their work.

Governors regularly visit the school, and frequently consult parents and other stakeholders. They show a good appreciation of their responsibilities, for example with regard to child protection. Leaders and managers at all levels show a good understanding of the school's priorities, as well as a willingness to tackle areas of underperformance. This, together with the improvements they have already made, demonstrates the school's sound capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that lessons consistently include sufficient pace and challenge.
- Share more widely good practice in assessment so that all students have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve the standard of their work
- Ensure that students have more opportunities to learn about different traditions and lifestyles throughout the United Kingdom.

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

Students join the school with standards that are just above average. The results they achieve at GCSE, including the proportion who gain A* to C grades including mathematics and English, are consistently above national averages. This represents satisfactory achievement. There is some variation in standards between subjects. Students have performed better in art, PE and English than those elsewhere, and less well in computer studies. The proportion of students who gain an A* to C pass in a modern foreign language is well above the national average. The progress made by students who took GCSE examinations in 2009, particularly in mathematics, was better than in previous years. The school's own data, as well as the results these students achieved at the end of Year 10, indicate that current Year 11 students are maintaining this improvement in progress.

Students have a good understanding of how to make healthy choices. For example, Year 7 students have made leaflets promoting healthy food. Students appreciate recent improvements in school catering, for example the new pasta bar, and their uptake of the healthy options available to them is high. They enjoy taking part in a good range of physical activities, including swimming, hockey and dance. Students behave safely around the school, as well as in workshops and laboratories. They are not unduly concerned about bullying, which they say is rare and dealt with well by the school. Many students are keen to take up opportunities to train as sports leaders, peer listeners, or 'cybermentors', who help to ensure that students are kept safe from inappropriate use of modern computer-based technology. The school council is rightly proud of the changes the school has made in response to their suggestions, for example with regard to sports changing rooms. Fundraising for charities is well supported and involves the

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whole school community. Students develop good teamwork and presentation skills through their participation in the work of the school council and its sub-committees. They develop leadership skills through taking on posts of responsibility within the school. For example, a high proportion of Year 11 students serve as prefects. They also acquire good work-related skills by taking part in staff appointment panels. The proportion of students who leave school without gaining places in further education, employment or training is low.

Students respond well to the good opportunities they have for reflection in assemblies. Younger students develop their self-confidence by helping with reception duties, and at school open evenings. Students' cultural development is enhanced by learning about the art, music and dance of a range of different cultures and traditions around the world.

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	2
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	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school's focus on improving students' achievement through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is bearing fruit. Warm and good-humoured relationships between teachers and students are the norm in the school. Students cooperate well with one

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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another, which in some lessons gives rise to excellent collaborative learning. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, students worked effectively together to debate a number of moral dilemmas. Many teachers plan lessons which take account of students' capabilities and previous learning, and consequently provide a good level of challenge for all. Less successful lessons lack this level of planning, as well as pace and variety, so that not all students make as much progress as they should. Teachers mark students' work regularly and thoroughly. Some teachers give students detailed advice about next steps for improvement, but this is inconsistent. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support in the classroom, which enables them to make at least satisfactory progress.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and recommendations and in some instances, for example in PE, exceeds them. The school's specialist status is having a positive impact on the curriculum. Students in Key Stage 3 benefit from very good opportunities to learn a range of languages. The school celebrates the European Day of Languages in ways that enrich the rest of their studies. For example, students report on the event as part of a project in English. In Key Stage 4, students can choose from a good range of vocational courses offered in collaboration with other local providers. There is a very high rate of participation in inter-school sports, and students enjoy a broad range of opportunities in the performing arts. Students who need them benefit from extra lessons in mathematics and English, as well as very good targeted support in the form of out-of-school homework and revision sessions. This has helped many students to reach or exceed their targets at GCSE.

The transition from primary school is well managed. One parent wrote, following an introductory tour of the school, 'It was lovely to see a school that actually lives up to what it says in the prospectus'. Students receive good quality information and advice about careers and further education options. The Inclusion Manager has successfully refined existing procedures to help students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that the most vulnerable students, and their families, are well supported. This includes providing teachers with good strategies to help individual students to improve their rate of progress. The number of exclusions has reduced dramatically. Heads of Year play a crucial role in monitoring attendance together with the newly appointed attendance officer. As a result, current procedures are increasingly effective in improving attendance and in substantially reducing persistent absenteeism.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and his senior team regularly monitor and rigorously evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This ensures that they have a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. They constantly review and have modified the curriculum to ensure that it effectively promotes students' achievement and personal development. Middle leaders are held to account for performance in their areas. They have made significant improvements, for example in improving students' progress in mathematics and in ensuring that lower-ability students are set sufficiently challenging targets in English. The governing body has undergone a number of significant changes recently, including the retirement of the previous chair, but this has not reduced its effectiveness. Governors are prepared to challenge the school's leadership, for example with regard to the school's disciplinary procedures, and have embarked on a thorough review of all the school's policies. The school has worked successfully to improve its communication with 'hard-to-reach' parents, including parents of vulnerable students. Nevertheless, a few parents do not feel sufficiently involved in the school's decision-making processes. The school works well with a range of outside bodies and professionals, such as the education welfare officer. It strongly promotes equality of opportunity. Students from different backgrounds and with different abilities relate well to one another. Racist incidents are few and are decreasing. Procedures for safeguarding children are fully in place, although records are not always immediately accessible. The school has made a thorough audit of its local community, and engages effectively with a range of different groups. It has developed strong links with local primary schools, where it successfully promotes the teaching of modern foreign languages. This work is recognised nationally. The school has established particularly strong links with schools in France, Germany, Poland and Sweden, as well as in Cuba. This has had a positive impact on students' understanding of life in both developed and developing countries. The school recognises the need to provide students with more opportunities to develop their understanding of and appreciation for the range of different faiths and ways of life represented in modern Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small number of parents responded to the questionnaire. A large majority of those who did respond were supportive of the school. Several parents expressed their appreciation for the smooth transition their children had made from primary school, and for teachers' prompt responses to individual concerns. Although a majority of parents agreed with inspectors' findings with regard to students' behaviour, a few expressed concerns about the way in which the school deals with inappropriate behaviour, and felt that the school did not do enough to address their concerns. Overall, inspectors broadly agreed with the views expressed by parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gaynes School Language 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 920 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	40	29	50	4	7	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	18	31	35	60	3	5	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	19	36	62	4	7	4	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	24	32	55	5	9	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	6	10	38	66	4	7	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	10	39	67	5	9	3	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	7	42	72	4	7	1	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)	10	17	36	62	3	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	17	38	66	4	7	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	22	24	41	1	2	4	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	7	35	60	6	10	4	7
The school is led and managed effectively	6	10	36	62	5	9	5	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	31	31	53	6	10	3	5

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.



15 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Gaynes School Language College, Upminster RM14 3UX

I would like to thank you all for the way you made the inspectors feel welcome and gave us your views about your school. I am writing to tell you about what we found.

Gaynes is a satisfactory school with a number of real strengths. Students make satisfactory progress and gain good qualifications. Nearly all of you go on to further education or training. You make a good contribution to the school through your work as prefects, peer listeners or 'cybermentors', and to the wider community by raising money for charity and working in local primary schools. You know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Many of you enjoy taking part in the school's good range of sporting and physical activities, and you like the new healthy options on offer in the canteen. You say you feel safe in school because you know who to go to if you need help, and you are not much concerned about bullying. Most of you say you like coming to school. You get on well with one another, and with your teachers. You learn a lot about different cultures around the world, but we think you would benefit from learning more about the variety of traditions in this country.

You behave well around the school, and in lessons. You respond very well when teachers plan activities for you that you find interesting and challenging. You have a good curriculum, especially with regard to the range of languages you can study. Most of you know and understand your targets, but we think some of you need more detailed information about how to improve your work. The staff take good care of you, and give you extra help when you need it. We think the headteacher, the rest of the senior staff and the governors are doing a good job in running the school. To make it even better we think they should:

- make sure all your lessons include sufficient pace and challenge
- give you more detailed information to help you improve your work
- give you more opportunities to learn about different traditions and lifestyles in this country.

We wish you all the best for the future!

Yours faithfully

Robin Gaff

Lead inspector

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