

Kingsford Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132058
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	315910
Inspection dates	12-13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Brooker (HMI)

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 on roll	
School	1433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Cocking
Headteacher	Ms Joan Deslandes
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2003
School address	Kingsford Way Beckton London E6 5JG
Telephone number	020 7476 4700
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kingsford is a large secondary school with more boys than girls. It has grown steadily since its last inspection when it just had pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. It serves an urban catchment that experiences high levels of socio-economic deprivation and high levels of mobility. The pupil population reflects the diverse multicultural character of the local community. Three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a proportion that is far higher than that found nationally. The largest proportions are from Black African, White British, Bangladeshi or Black Caribbean heritages, although over the last two years there has been a significant increase in numbers of pupils from Eastern Europe. Well over half of pupils speak English as an additional language, with 124 pupils at an early stage of learning English; both proportions are very high. The school has a high level of turbulence, with significantly more pupils arriving or leaving than is usual during the course of the school year. Eighty-nine pupils are from families of refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is twice the national figure. There is a small but significant number of pupils with profound or multiple learning difficulties.

The school became a Specialist Language College in 2005. In addition, it has achieved a number of other accreditations, including Confucius Classroom, Sports Mark, Arts Mark, Investors in People, Healthy Schools and Financial Mark status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kingsford Community School has a number of obvious strengths, some of which are outstanding. Its overall effectiveness is good. Pupils are making better progress academically, than last year. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding.

The school provides a harmonious community where pupils from diverse backgrounds work together seamlessly and productively. It is a safe haven where pupils feel supported and well cared for, and able to thrive and enjoy school. The school's positive ethos underpins the excellent care and support that it provides. Strong leadership, a good curriculum and the high levels of commitment from staff, all combine to make pupils' personal development outstanding. The pupils mature as thoughtful, responsible and considerate young people who are keen to contribute to their own community and understand their wider social responsibilities. The majority have positive attitudes to learning and behave very well; the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils is well managed.

The school recognises that there has been significant underachievement in previous years. Its success in raising standards reflects the clear focus on improving achievement through strengthening its provision. Results in 2007, although slightly below the national figures, represent satisfactory achievement. However, there was quite wide variation between the performance of different subjects and between groups of pupils. The school's rigorous analysis of its performance has pinpointed shortcomings, and its further improvement has been underpinned by the continued drive to adapt and improve the curriculum and to strengthen teaching. Improvements in teaching have accelerated pupils' progress and their achievement is satisfactory. School data indicates that it is on course to make significant improvements in standards and achievement in 2008.

The quality of teaching has improved and is good. Pupils make good progress in most lessons, although the uneven quality of learning reflects variation in the effectiveness of teaching. The best lessons are sharply focused on what pupils with different abilities should achieve, and rigorous assessment is skilfully used to accelerate improvement. However, the outstanding practice found in some lessons is not sufficiently replicated across the curriculum. The school's specialism in languages makes a positive contribution to provision and to the pupils' personal development.

Since the last inspection, the school's expansion has been well managed, particularly in terms of developing the skills and effectiveness of staff. The school is very well led and managed. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, along with the excellent support of the deputy headteacher, is central to the school's ethos and its improvement. Self-evaluation is systematic and robust. Procedures for monitoring the school's performance are soundly based on the rigorous use of assessment data. The cohesive team of senior and middle managers has good capacity to extend its recent successes in raising standards. The school has addressed the issues from the last inspection and has made good improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in those subjects and for those groups of pupils that the school has highlighted as underperforming.
- Ensure that the best practice that exists in teaching, particularly in lesson planning and in the use of assessment, is more widely replicated so that all pupils are able to make accelerated progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although standards are slightly below those seen nationally, results in Key Stage 3 national tests and at GCSE have increased significantly since the last inspection. Despite missing its specialist college targets in 2007, the school's most marked improvements have been at GCSE where the proportion of pupils who gained at least five higher grades has increased significantly since the school's first results in 2005. The school has improved from a situation where achievement was significantly below average in 2005 and 2006 to being broadly average in 2007. Given the pupils' starting points, which are generally below average, this represents satisfactory achievement. However, this satisfactory picture masks the variable achievement of different subjects and between different groups of pupils: achievement in English in 2007 was good, but it was below average in mathematics; the achievement of Pakistani pupils was good, whereas the achievement of White British pupils and those with the most significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities was significantly below average at GCSE; and the achievement of pupils from African heritage was significantly below average at Key Stage 3.

The school's sustained success in raising standards reflects the effective way that its self-evaluation has improved provision. It makes good use of assessment information to analyse performance, to set challenging targets, to track progress and to guide improvement. School data indicates that pupils make good progress in response to improvements in teaching and that it is firmly on course to exceed last year's results and its own targets in 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are outstanding. Pupils feel safe and well cared for at school and know how to live healthily. They are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and confident that it responds quickly to any concerns that they have. A high proportion of pupils enjoy the healthy meals in the canteen and the many sporting activities on offer. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding. They develop into mature and reflective young adults who show a strong sense of responsibility and a genuine concern for others. The way that pupils contribute to their own school, and to the wider community, is exemplary. The school council is a model of 'best practice' and council representatives train primary school pupils in how to run their councils. Pupils work with partner schools stating that 'we come together to help each other' and that as a community they are 'pledged to stop knife crime'.

Although all pupils do not always meet the school's high expectations, behaviour is good in lessons and around the corridors. In general, the pupils enjoy coming to school and are appreciative of the many opportunities that it provides. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now in line with national figures. Pupils develop personal qualities and skills that prepare them well for the next stage in their education and for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In general, pupils make good progress in lessons. This mirrors the good quality of teaching they experience. The school has made effective use of its systematic monitoring and evaluation, including peer observations, to strengthen teaching.

There is a good climate for learning in lessons. Positive relationships enable pupils to cooperate productively and give them the confidence to volunteer answers. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to structure the pupils' learning and plan a good range of activities to actively engage them. The pupils enjoy working collaboratively and independently, often in groups or on practical tasks, such as making Chelsea buns in Year 9. The best teaching has the highest expectations of what all pupils will achieve. In these lessons, the planning is sharply focused on what different groups will achieve, and work is skilfully and briskly managed. However, there is wide variation between the progress that pupils make in the outstanding lessons and those where the pace of learning is more pedestrian. In particular, there are inconsistencies in the way that work is planned to meet the needs of all pupils and in the way that assessment is used to set challenging targets and to guide improvement. Senior managers are aware of strengths and the areas that need further development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has worked hard to extend and adapt the curriculum since the last inspection to ensure that it meets the academic aspirations and personal development needs of all pupils. There is a greater range of courses, particularly at Key Stage 4 where there are more vocational options. Higher attaining pupils can be 'fast-tracked' in order to gain additional qualifications, for example, in mathematics and ICT. The school's specialist status has resulted in an offer of five modern foreign languages, including Mandarin, and pupils are able to take examinations in their community languages. Over half of pupils study two modern languages in Key Stage 3 and the number in Key Stage 4 is increasing. Opportunities for language learning extend to the local community with classes in Arabic, for example, on Saturdays.

There is an excellent range of out-of-school and enrichment activities. Some of these take place at weekends and are open to Year 6 pupils. The school's facilities, including the library and computers, are available to pupils before and after the school day. Many pupils receive additional help through the 'Extended School' programme and the recently developed 'Learning Platform' that enables pupils to access learning materials electronically in an increasing number of subjects. Pupils who are at the earlier stages of learning English are able to take part in summer holiday courses. The curriculum is further enriched by a number of days devoted entirely to themes, such as Enterprise Week, International Language Week and Democracy Day, which involve all pupils. Some pupils have visited France and China in order to gain work experience. The curriculum is well supported by events such as the 'Poetry Slam' and a debating competition and there is a comprehensive programme of educational visits that extends pupils' learning beyond the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school provides a safe and supportive environment for learning and gives excellent support for pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils are encouraged to care for one another, with many older pupils acting as prefects, mentors or buddies. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress at whole-school level are excellent. A strong and effective pastoral team works closely with pupils, parents and tutors to track the individual progress of pupils, to guide their development and to provide appropriate intervention when necessary. The school makes excellent use of external services to provide specific support and guidance. Strong links with local primary schools ensure that transition arrangements are good, although careers guidance needs strengthening.

There are consistent procedures in place for safeguarding pupils. There is excellent support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported by a dedicated department that ensures that they are seamlessly integrated into the life and culture of the school. The school reaches out to support its community by helping parents new to the country with after-school classes and by providing links to local support networks.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely together to provide outstanding leadership, focused on raising achievement. The headteacher's drive, described by the chair of governors as 'absolutely unbelievable', has given the school the resilience to move forward in the face of a number of acute challenges over the last year. The cohesive and increasingly effective senior leadership team supports her clear vision for the school. The senior team has introduced a variety of initiatives that have raised the school's profile both locally and nationally. Some, such as the introduction of Mandarin and the link with an independent school to provide scholarships into their sixth form, are highly innovative.

The school's recent expansion fostered a culture of leadership and support at all levels, including the pupils. The school is strongly committed to inclusion and addressing the needs of pupils from its many communities, and has effective systems in place for seeking the views of parents and pupils. The enthusiasm of the newly qualified teachers reflects the school's supportive ethos.

Self-evaluation is systematic and increasingly rigorous, although the most effective evaluations focus sharply on the quality of learning and the pupils' progress. Senior managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Strategies for disseminating good practice are well established and target setting has become increasingly more challenging. Supportive links have been developed with successful departments in other schools in order to raise aspirations and strengthen provision.

Governors are very committed and supportive of the school. They bring a variety of skills to the school and provide appropriate challenge through increasingly effective sub-committees. Financial management is good and ensures resources are used effectively and efficiently.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 interest of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

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	1
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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsford Community School, London, E6 5JG

Thank you for the positive contribution that you made to our recent inspection. Like other visitors, we were impressed by your friendly welcome and the way that you articulated your views. Your opinions, and those of your parents, were very helpful in confirming what staff told us about the school.

We agree that Kingsford is a good school and were particularly impressed with:

- the way that the school's strong and effective leadership has guided its improvement since the last inspection
- the school's inclusive ethos and harmonious climate where adults and pupils get on well and work productively together
- the outstanding care, guidance and support that the school provides
- the good progress that most of you make in lessons
- your outstanding personal development, including the excellent contributions that you make to the school and the wider community, for example as prefects, peer mentors and school council representatives.

You and your parents raised a few issues that we have discussed with the school, but it is clear from speaking with you, and from the questionnaire responses that we received, that most of you enjoy school and appreciate the many opportunities that it provides. There have been important improvements since the last inspection, particularly in attendance, teaching and standards. The curriculum has also been strengthened so that it better meets your needs. Nonetheless there are important areas that can improve, and we have asked the school to focus specifically on:

- raising standards, particularly where some of you have been underachieving
- ensuring that you make more rapid progress in lessons; teaching is good, but the excellent planning and assessment that your best teachers do so well needs to be more widely replicated.

We recognise that you have some say in the way that the school makes improvements and it is important that you continue to play your part.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Brooker

Her Majesty's Inspector