

Little Ilford School

Browning Road, London, E12 6ET

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of students gaining five good passes at GCSE, including mathematics and English, has risen considerably. Attainment is now broadly average, with students making outstanding progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. This is also the case with boys who previously were not attaining as well as girls. The small proportion of more-able students has attained a significantly higher number of A* to A grades at GCSE.
- Students' behaviour is good and improving quickly. It is not outstanding because students are not given sufficiently structured opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. The number of exclusions has fallen dramatically in the last two years. Students are extremely well supported by the school's caring and highly effective community. Attendance is excellent.
- Teaching over time is outstanding. Every individual counts and careful monitoring and intervention systems ensure all students achieve their ambitious targets. However, in a very few lessons teachers do not use their extensive knowledge of students' abilities to plan work that is challenging for the most able, or enable students to work independently.
- The extremely effective leadership team, led by a passionate and relentless headteacher, has transformed the school. The strong improvement in students' results clearly demonstrates that the school leaders are very capable of improving students' outcomes further.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Forty-one lessons were observed which were taught by forty-one teachers.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, parents and carers, members of the governing body and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the eleven responses to the on-line Parent View in planning the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at achievement data, the school's progress plan and self-evaluation, minutes of the governing body meetings, exclusion, bullying and attendance data.

Inspection team

Samantha Morgan-Price, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mahar Brar	Additional Inspector
Rebecca Cummings	Additional Inspector
Howard Dodd	Additional Inspector
Valerie Fehners	Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- Little Ilford is a larger than average school serving a culturally diverse community. Over half the school's population are known to be eligible for free school meals and the government's pupil premium. This is significantly above the national average.
- Most students are from minority ethnic backgrounds; over four fifths of the school's population speak English as an additional language.
- An average proportion of students who are disabled or have a special educational needs are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. Just under a quarter of the school is supported at school action.
- The school exceeds the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable all students to make consistently outstanding progress across all lessons by:
 - teachers ensuring that tasks challenge and stretch all students including the most able to enable them to lead and take responsibility in their learning
 - ensuring marked work and informative guidance are of the highest quality to enable students to know how to improve their performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment which are significantly lower than others nationally; a large number of these are eligible for the pupil premium. Many have weak reading and writing skills and have a range of complex, social and emotional needs. The school's highly effective support systems have enabled students to achieve outstanding progress.
- Students' attainment by the end of Year 11 has risen since the last inspection. At the end of the last academic year, there were considerable improvements in many subjects, especially English and mathematics. Students have attained above average standards in mathematics for the last two years. Standards have risen from a low base and are now in line with national averages. The school has successfully narrowed the gap between the attainment of boys and girls.
- The most able students attained a significantly higher number of A* to A grades at GCSE. This reflects in this group making better progress, especially in the subjects of English literature, German, history, sociology and Spanish.
- GCSE subjects that were performing less well in 2011 have shown very good improvement. Physical education has shown the most marked improvement with over four fifths of students attaining a good grade at GCSE.
- Students make outstanding progress, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who speak English is an additional language. This is especially the case for disabled students, those with special educational needs and those supported by school action plus.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding. High expectations and challenging targets result in teachers having a thorough understanding of the performance of students. Robust assessment and highly effective monitoring, which has been significant in the school's success, have meant that individual support for students is implemented quickly.
- Students take pride in their work and the school-wide literacy strategies are highly effective in contributing to improving standards in all subjects. Students critically appraise each other's work and identify errors in literacy extremely well. In a few lessons, there are strong examples of teachers linking literacy to mathematics. Teachers model language skills very well across the school.
- The broad and rich curriculum contributes highly effectively to students' exemplary achievement. The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills is evident in lessons. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, where students discussed Browning's poetry, they developed a deepened understanding of the culture and historical context of the poem's setting. In a Year 9 sociology lesson, students discussed GCSE-level questions regarding the morality of gender and stereotypes well.
- Excellent examples were seen where students were stretched and challenged in their work. In a drama lesson, students were encouraged to perform to a high standard and made outstanding use of precise critical judgements from the teacher and other students. However, in a very few lessons students do not experience a high level of challenge in their tasks so inhibiting them from excelling in these lessons, especially the most able. Some students do not demonstrate a high level of independence in lessons and receive significant teacher guidance on how to complete their tasks.
- The development of social skills through group or paired discussion is positively encouraged in almost every lesson. The use of peer and individual assessment is increasing and provides students with a better understanding of National Curriculum levels of attainment.
- The excellent marking by some teachers in subjects such as English contributes well to the clear understanding of students of how they can improve their performance. However, there were a few examples of marked work seen that did not provide explanatory or helpful comments. This

hindered students' appreciation of what needed to be done to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The sheer determination shown by leaders and managers has resulted in a considerable reduction in the number of exclusions at the end of the last academic year. In particular, in 2010, exclusions were relatively high. The use of harder sanctions has diminished. Students know how they are expected to behave and they are respectful of staff and other students. Different faiths and cultures are welcomed and diversity is embraced by students.
- Students in some lessons are taking responsibility for their own learning, especially in sociology and English. However, there are still some lessons where students do not work independently and there is a heavy reliance on their teacher's guidance. The school's strategy of 'ask three before me' is starting to have good effect in increasing their independence.
- Students feel extremely safe at all times. The responses from Parent View and from the parents and carers spoken to during the inspection support this view. They enjoy what the school has to offer and attendance is outstanding.
- Bullying in this large school is extremely rare, and the measures used to monitor and evaluate poor behaviour have had good effect. Students have a very strong appreciation of the different forms of bullying. Strategies have been extremely successful in raising students' awareness and promoting a respect for diversity especially in relation to homophobic bullying.
- There are excellent procedures to secure the well-being of students whose personal circumstances may make them vulnerable to poor behaviour or attendance. These have contributed well to the school's above-average attendance and very good punctuality.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's philosophy of 'there are no quick fixes' suitably demonstrates the approach the school has taken to improve standards. Data of the highest standard are used extremely well by all staff to meet the challenging targets set by leaders. Attainment continues to be on an impressive improving trend, moving from a low position in 2009 for five or more A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, to an average position in the last academic year. The school knows its successes and next steps required to bring about further improvement. These are meticulously identified and monitored by senior leaders.
- Subjects that were not performing as well as the best in 2011 all demonstrate significant improvement. As a result of these actions, leaders and managers demonstrate an exemplary capacity to improve students' performance even further.
- The curriculum is outstanding because of its highly effective finely-tuned pathways at Key Stage 4 which are tailored for students' different academic abilities. It contributes significantly to the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example teachers use every opportunity in lessons to develop students' social skills including oracy. The Big Read, which is one of the school's strategies to encourage students of all ages to read, has had good impact on increasing students' enthusiasm for reading. It has resulted in a growing number of books loaned from the library.
- The considerable closing of the gap between the attainment of boys and girls has meant that no group of students is falling behind. This enables the school to demonstrate that it promotes equality of opportunity extremely well. However, school leaders' evaluation of how effective the pupil premium has been in raising attainment for potentially the most vulnerable group lacks analysis other than GCSE results.
- There are strong arrangements to secure the safety and well-being of students especially those potentially at risk of underachieving. The excellent relationships that the school has forged with external agencies provide extensive support especially for those who have been involved in

'managed moves' from other institutions, such as pupil referral units.

- The meticulous approach to monitoring students is replicated in leaders' and managers' approach to improving teaching. A significant proportion of teaching is outstanding, and where teaching is weaker there are actions in place to improve it. Continual professional development takes a high priority. Learning walks, coaching and mentoring provide information to inform senior leaders how well specific initiatives are working. The excellent process of identifying and pulling together strengths and weaknesses across the school has informed leaders of how effective teaching initiatives are. Peer support is used very well and performance management procedures are excellent in successfully driving through improvements to the quality of teaching.
 - The specialist subject of mathematics has been highly successful in deepening students' mathematical understanding and achieving above averages standards in their GCSEs.
 - Minimal local authority support has been given to the school. Its support to assist the school in raising attainment has been effective.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - the members of the governing body are extremely well informed and possess a range of skills and expertise to challenge leaders and managers about the performance of the school
 - there are many established members who are critical friends of the school's leaders and have effectively challenged many aspects of the school's performance including the new curriculum developments
 - the governing body works effectively to engage parents and the Friends of Little Ilford is a strong vehicle for parents to influence the running of the school.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102776
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	395708

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	1325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Mares
Headteacher	Ms Yvonne Powell
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 June 2009
Telephone number	020 8478 8024
Fax number	020 8478 5954
Email address	info@littleilford.org

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