

Mayfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102858
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	355273
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Gillies

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	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1461
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Backhouse
Headteacher	Andy Rehling
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2007
School address	Pedley Road Dagenham Essex RM8 1XE
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. Over 40 lessons were observed, including several accompanied by members of the senior leadership team, and close to 50 teachers were seen in lessons and tutor sessions. Meetings were held with several groups of students, teaching and non-teaching staff, the Chair of Governors and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at several documents, including details about its specialism, tracking and monitoring data, governance, the school development plan, its community links and questionnaires completed by staff, students and 94 parents and carers.

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

- How well the school tackles underachievement either in subjects or by different groups of students.
- Whether attainment and progress data match the school's analysis of sixth form performance.

Information about the school

In this large school almost eight out of ten students belong to minority ethnic groups, particularly Asian or Asian British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is high and of these about one in five is at an early stage of learning the language. Over one in ten students are refugees or asylum seekers, which contributes to high mobility. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average. Their main learning needs are for moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural support. The school has specialist status in humanities and media arts, focusing on English, history and media and provides full extended services. Recently the school received an intermediate International School Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Mayfield School's overall effectiveness is good. For many students, such as refugees, those who speak little English when they enter the school or who have issues to deal with outside school, their success is down to the school's dogged determination to give them whatever help they need and to stick with them at all costs. The support and care provided is outstanding.

Another very strong element is the school's ethnic harmony, excellent relationships and mutual respect. Students feel very safe and enjoy school, which contributes to their good learning. Celebration of diversity is encouraged. Whatever their backgrounds, students are expected to work hard and behave well – practically all of them do. The headteacher successfully generates a keen focus on improvement by all staff and students.

The school's outstanding promotion of community cohesion is seen in its work to improve the quality of life for all by links with local primary schools and organisations, and in its support for parents and carers. Activities with countries such as Bangladesh help students to appreciate their own and others' cultural backgrounds.

Following a dip the year before, in 2010 the proportion of students attaining five GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics was the best yet; over one in four students attained 25% or more A*/A grades in science subjects, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The proportion of A/B grades at A level rose to almost 50% in 2010. In all years, the large majority of students achieve well.

Nevertheless, the school's accurate and rigorous levels of self-evaluation mean it is alert to the fluctuations and variations between years, subjects and different ethnic, gender or other groups, and always takes firm action to address them. This is one reason that the school's capacity to improve is good. Another factor is the confidence staff, students, parents and carers have in the headteacher, his forward thinking and his determination to keep raising standards.

Much teaching is good with examples of outstanding and imaginative practice in several subjects. In less effective teaching, checks on students' learning and understanding during lessons are not sufficiently informed by knowledge of students' individual needs to prepare work and resources that help them all to learn equally

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well. This is particularly the case for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Except for those who choose it as a GCSE course, religious education is not taught in Years 10 and 11. Despite some aspects featuring in several assemblies and personal, social and health sessions, citizenship is not covered fully enough in all years. Following an ambitious cross-curricular project in Year 7 last year, students observed they would like 'More world problems.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers consider, prepare resources and mark work to match the specific needs of students, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language, so they always make as good progress as others.
- Encourage teachers to discuss and assess, with them, students' understanding and progress during lessons and, combined with formal assessment and monitoring, use the outcomes to plan future lessons which further develop and challenge students' understanding and skills.
- Review the programme for personal, social and health education to include all aspects of the national curriculum for citizenship and develop religious education for all in Years 10 and 11.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Lessons are underpinned by respect between students and teachers which generates excellent relationships and good behaviour. In such an atmosphere, students feel confident, are happy to have a go at new things and concentrate well. They work constructively together in groups, whether carrying out experiments, researching, or discussing ideas with each other.

Around 90% of students feel they learn a lot in lessons and a similar percentage of parents and carers feel that teaching is good. In an excellent Year 11 physics lesson, students thoroughly enjoyed demonstrating their understanding of refraction by modelling it themselves. Even when lessons are not as inspiring, students' behaviour is good. Students observe that they are taught well in most lessons and enjoy them but they would like more of them to be fun!

Attainment on entry to the school fluctuates; overall, it is below average, particularly in reading. Standards continue to be close to average. Students achieve well and, in history (a specialist subject), art and drama, for example, their progress is consistently very good. In the other two specialist subjects, students did particularly well in English in 2009 but media results were not strong in 2009 or 2010.

Girls do better in most subjects but the gap with boys has narrowed significantly in recent years, as has the gap between those who take free school meals and those

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that do not. Students of Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage attain the highest GCSE results while White British and Black Caribbean students attain lower standards. However, with low attainment on entry, White British students achieve at least as well as other groups. A few students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and a few students who speak English as an additional language could achieve more.

Students are adamant that bullying and racist incidents are extremely rare; their unacceptability is part of the school’s ethos. Safety issues are addressed consistently in many subjects as well as through personal, social and health education sessions. Students are well prepared for their future studies and the world of work and realise why the school focuses on developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

Students acknowledge that the school encourages them to lead healthy lives and know that a healthy diet is important, though some do not necessarily like it! Participation rates in sports are below average, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Students value the very good relationships, drugs and general health education they receive.

The potential for students to contribute to the school and wider community is wide but not all are engaged in such roles. Nevertheless, the school parliament is a respected body that gets things done and sports leaders contribute much time both at Mayfield and in primary schools.

The headteacher expects teachers’ behaviour to be ‘a model of how to be’ in guiding students’ social and moral development. This is put into practice effectively and, combined with assemblies and discussions in several subjects, students’ awareness of social, moral and cultural issues and expectations is good. Their appreciation of spiritual issues is less secure as religious education is not taught in Years 10 and 11 and few assemblies touch on these areas.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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

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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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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Some teachers skilfully plan groups which bring out the best in individuals or pose questions which carefully extend students' understanding. There is a clear correlation between very good progress and work that matches students' different abilities. In such lessons, students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language make as good progress as others. Not all teachers use visual or other resources which would help these students, or mark their work in enough detail to help them to move forward. While formal assessment and monitoring is good, assessment of students' understanding and progress during lessons is not as strong.

Teachers certainly try to include different activities in lessons but there are few interactive whiteboards, which limits their use of this potentially stimulating resource. Keen to prepare students as well as possible for Year 11 examinations, teachers occasionally over-direct learning or lessons proceed slowly so that learning is held back.

The curriculum is adjusted to meet the school's changing intake and students' needs and has built-in flexibility so that students can combine courses that interest and suit them. Reflecting its specialism, there are several popular media courses, including the Diploma and other vocational ones. The school has a nurture group for students who need help to settle in, well-planned activities for gifted and talented students and lessons for Years 7 and 8 on 'learning to learn'. Extra-curricular activities are generous; those who join in enjoy them.

With students' well-being being a top priority, the school embraces external and internal support, such as a safer schools officer or parent/student adviser, most effectively. These, and many staff, work tirelessly to support students who have particular behavioural or emotional needs, and refugees and those who speak little English on arrival are catered for very well. Students of all ages reflect on how helpfully they were introduced to secondary school and how much they enjoyed their 'taster days' when they were in primary school. Very helpful careers advice occurs at relevant points.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

It is the headteacher's successful insistence on staff being excellent role models for students that generates the positive relationships and multicultural harmony that pervade the school. Practically every parent and carer who responded to the questionnaire feels that their child enjoys school. Students know that they should aim for higher education and worthwhile careers. They are given ambitious targets, and assemblies regularly focus on how they can achieve them.

Well over 90% of staff are proud to work at Mayfield and students think, rightly, that the staff and headteacher are 'doing a good job.' A recent successful development is weekly meetings for all subject and year leaders. This has generated sharing of good practice and 'taking solutions and issues to the headteacher rather than problems.' The school is rightly focusing on improving learning by encouraging students to study independently, listening to their views on what helps them to learn and ensuring teachers give them work at exactly the right level.

The promotion of equality for all is reflected in the school's detailed analysis of standards and progress by groups and the rapid action taken to address underachievement and the reasons for it. The gap between girls' and boys' GCSE results has narrowed significantly in recent years. Equally important is work to raise self-esteem, a Muslim Youth Project for example, or the modifications made to the curriculum so that all students can gain qualifications.

Governors monitor the school's good safeguarding and child protection arrangements and procedures. Students' understanding of health and safety issues is given a high profile. Staff training is regular and expertise is shared effectively, although a few aspects of the safeguarding policy could be more detailed.

The Chair of Governors has given the school support for many years; he has an excellent grasp of its strengths and areas for development. These are mirrored in the school's development plan which reflects accurate and honest self-evaluation. The headteacher is very well supported by his senior leadership team, administrative staff and the governing body. The latter reflects the composition of the school population with a good spread of experienced and new governors; attendance at meetings, discussion groups and presentation evenings is high.

Senior leaders and the governors are fully aware that there are too few computers in school and that they do not work efficiently; they are dealing with this situation as best they can and appreciate its impact on staff and students alike. The school gives good value for money.

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Numerous partnerships benefit students, parents and carers and other local groups, for example focusing on reducing crime. The school is enthusiastically involved in the spirit of the 2012 Olympics.

The school’s excellent promotion of community cohesion means parents and carers feel well informed about school life and teachers work hard to maintain regular contact with them. A school-produced DVD is available for parents and carers for whom English is not their first language. Charity work raises the profile of those in need and the school has very successful and meaningful links, often using webcams and email, with India, Tanzania and China. Comparing flooding issues in Bangladesh and the United Kingdom is just one of many projects linked to a country with which many students have ties. This significantly broadens students’ understanding of others from differing backgrounds.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Practically all students make good progress and in some, for example AS physics and accounting, A level chemistry, vocational health and social care and BTEC business, they achieve extremely well. For the last three years, AS results have been above and A level results in line with national average figures. Teaching is good with independent study being encouraged by most teachers - a few do not challenge students enough to think for themselves.

The number of students completing their chosen courses is high and, following excellent advice, guidance and pastoral care, practically all proceed to universities, further education or training. This is an outstanding outcome for the majority of

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students but achievement has fluctuated in recent years and varies between subjects.

The leadership of Years 12 and 13 is excellent with dedicated form tutors and efficient management. Many students respond to opportunities to contribute to school life and the local community, especially working in primary schools or organising charity events.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. Many agree that their children are safe, happy, taught well and making enough progress. A few parents and carers wrote comments on the questionnaires about inconsistency in teaching, referring to some excellent teachers and some who do not motivate students as well. The inspection team observed that teachers were not all equally effective but found that teaching was good overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mayfield 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1461 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	31	63	67	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	30	60	64	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	25	27	58	62	7	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	27	52	55	11	12	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	16	17	67	71	9	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	13	14	58	62	17	18	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	14	58	62	19	20	0	0
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)	20	21	54	57	11	12	2	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	13	14	55	59	16	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	20	52	55	14	15	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	11	56	60	16	17	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	25	27	54	57	8	9	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	32	53	56	9	10	1	1

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



30 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Mayfield School, Dagenham RM8 1XE

We much enjoyed visiting your school and hearing what some of you think about it; thank you for being so welcoming and we are sorry that we could not meet more of you. We were particularly impressed with how well you get on with each other, behave sensibly and respect each other's different backgrounds. This would not happen without very strong leadership and respectful staff and excellent links with the local community and overseas countries. It is encouraging that you appreciate the outstandingly good care, support and guidance you receive.

The school does well to achieve examination results which are close to average, and higher in some subjects, and you are right to feel that you learn a lot in lessons. We agree with you that you are taught well. Nevertheless, to ensure that you all do as well as possible, we have asked teachers to assess your understanding and progress more during lessons, not just through written assessments, and to prepare resources and work which match your individual needs more closely. For example, those of you who do not speak English fluently or have a particular learning need, would find more visual material helpful.

One thing we noticed is that quite a few of you do not take enough physical exercise each week – an important part of leading a healthy life and one that you could easily improve! The final thing we have included for the school to do is to introduce religious education for all of you in Years 10 and 11 and to teach all aspects of citizenship (one of the subjects included in the national curriculum). Both these are intended to broaden your horizons and prepare you well for the complexities of life beyond school.

Whatever career you have in mind, we hope you will achieve it and be successful. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies
Lead inspector

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