

Edmonton County School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102043
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	335830
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham 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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	623
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Konrad Halls
Headteacher	Ms Siobhan Leahy
Date of previous school inspection	7 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and six additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 44 lessons and an assembly. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, self-evaluation from different departments, analyses of students' progress and attainment, and questionnaires completed by 699 parents, 141 pupils and 68 staff

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

- the pace and challenge of lessons and how well assessment helps students to improve their standard of work
- the achievement of different groups of students, including those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language, the more able and potentially vulnerable students
- the school's capacity to sustain improvement.

Information about the school

Edmonton County is a large school on two sites just under a mile apart. Most students live locally and they come from a diverse range of socio-economic and ethnic communities. The largest minority ethnic groups represented are of Turkish, Greek, Black Caribbean and Black African heritage. The percentage of students speaking English as an additional language is well above the national average. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The school has had specialist designation in technology since 2006. It was awarded Healthy School status in 2007 and achieved Investors in People re-designation in 2009.

A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. The headteacher leads and manages both sites and divides her time between the two. She is supported by a leadership team which works across sites.

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

Edmonton County is a rapidly improving school. Since the last inspection the headteacher and the senior leadership team have taken effective action to identify and tackle underachievement and provide all students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding which will serve them well in their future lives. This has led to significant improvements in examination results, participation and attendance. The school manages and supports the needs of a diverse school population well to provide a well-ordered, purposeful and safe community where students value and respect each other's differences.

At the time of the last inspection, standards were below average but they have improved during the past three years and are now broadly average. In 2009 the school achieved their best ever results in GCSE examinations. There is variation in attainment between subjects, which the school is working hard to eliminate. In the specialist subjects, attainment in science is well above average but mathematics and technology are not meeting their targets, mainly because lessons are not always suitably challenging and students are not helped consistently and clearly to see what they need to do to improve their work. Despite these weaker areas, current students of all abilities are making good overall progress, including able students, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The school is successful in removing barriers to learning for different groups of students so that all achieve equally well.

Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good because the headteacher and senior leaders have placed a high priority on improving professional development and increasing accountability across departments. Leading teachers across the curriculum offer individual support and model good practice. Coaching and mentoring are used very well to share the features of outstanding practice that exists. Effective teaching in English and science is being shared across other subjects to further improve the quality of learning. However, a small minority of weak teaching remains.

The school is well led. The dynamic headteacher is supported by a team of committed and enthusiastic senior leaders. Thorough and accurate self-evaluation has allowed the school to review the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and personalise the 14'19 curriculum so that they better meet students' individual needs. Rigorous systems to analyse assessment data have led to effective mentoring and intervention, and more precise use of assessment to support learning has improved achievement. Most students are given clear guidance about what they need to do in order to improve. Strong leadership and management underpin the school's good capacity to improve further.

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There has not been the same rate of improvement in the sixth form as in the rest of the school. Attainment in the sixth form is average and students make satisfactory progress overall. There is considerable variation in achievement between subjects. The school has correctly identified the use of assessment, the relevance of lesson activities and the promotion of independence as areas for improvement, and sixth form leaders have a clear vision of how to raise standards and move teaching and learning from satisfactory to consistently good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - making consistently good use of assessment to support learning
 - planning activities and tasks that make lessons interactive and engaging
 - developing students' independent study skills.
- Raise standards in subjects which do not achieve results that are above the national average, particularly mathematics and technology, by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently match teaching and learning to the students' range of abilities to build on what they already know and understand
 - all teachers consolidate peer assessment and students' own assessment of their work with meaningful verbal feedback and regular marking.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In the majority of lessons observed the quality of learning was good and students made good progress. The vast majority of students are well behaved and keen to engage. They respond well when teaching sustains their concentration, provides the correct level of challenge and provides opportunities for them to become involved in their learning. On the few occasions when teaching is uninspiring and teachers are not alert to students' level of understanding, students lose motivation and behaviour is less good. Students enjoy coming to school and value the school community because they feel safe, well cared for and supported. The school is successful in promoting the values of respect and responsibility and in encouraging all students to work together. Instances of discrimination or racism are extremely rare. Exclusion rates are well below the national average. Careful monitoring takes place across departments and year groups to make sure that there are no significant variations in achievement between different groups in the school.

Attendance, judged satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, is now good. The school has been very effective in tackling the persistent poor attendance of a small minority of students and is working hard to change the attitude of the few parents who condone absence.

The broad and flexible curriculum allows students to develop and apply the skills and personal qualities they will need in the future. Partnerships with local colleges offer a

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broader choice of courses at Key Stages 4 and 5 and have improved the motivation and attendance of students who were at risk of becoming disaffected. The numbers of students who do not go on to further education, employment or training are exceptionally low.

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

How effective is the provision?

The headteacher has a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A thorough programme of lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutinies and reviews by middle leaders is used to improve the quality of teaching. The use of assessment to support learning has been a priority for professional development for the past two years and this is improving the quality of learning. In subjects where good practice is embedded, such as science and English, effective teachers plan learning activities that are based on what students are capable of achieving and what they have already learnt. Targeted questioning and self- and peer-assessment involve the whole class so that teachers and additional adults can assess progress accurately and amend the teaching if required. In lessons where there are limited opportunities for students to

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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discuss their learning with each other and teachers do not provide meaningful verbal feedback or mark their work regularly, students make less progress.

Since the last inspection the quality of the curriculum has improved with some aspects that are outstanding. Ethics and philosophy and the learning for life course at Key Stage 3 contribute effectively to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and an understanding of their community. Students studying vocational courses and diplomas in media and health and social care at Key Stage 4 are achieving well. A broader choice of science courses has led to significantly improved GCSE results and more students applying to study science in the sixth form. More able students benefit from an enhanced and extended curriculum which has led to an improvement in those attaining the higher levels and grades at Key Stages 3 and 4. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and student leadership projects provide exciting opportunities for students from different backgrounds and of different ages to interact and work together.

Good levels of support and care are carefully targeted to improve the confidence, self-esteem and achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and potentially vulnerable students. Students with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties receive very good levels of support. Good quality advice and guidance allow students to make appropriate decisions about their future.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection leadership and management have been strengthened at all levels. The headteacher communicates an ambitious vision to drive and secure improvement. By introducing rigorous self-evaluation across departments and year groups and establishing teacher learning communities, the capacity of middle leaders to contribute to curriculum development and influence the quality of learning across the school has increased. The school rightly recognises that the skills and understanding of a minority of middle managers and a few teachers are not yet sufficiently well developed to achieve consistently good performance across all subjects.

The school meets all the statutory requirements for safeguarding and the systems in place are coherent and effective. The school works well with parents and external agencies to promote the safety, health and welfare of all students. The school takes

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determined action to ensure that all groups of students are treated equally and that there is no difference in the performance or experience of different groups. The school's leaders have an excellent understanding of the local context and strategies to promote cohesion within the school and the immediate community are very effective. The curriculum is planned well to promote students' understanding of British society and the wider world. The school is building on its success in engaging Turkish families by establishing links with a school in Turkey. The governing body has strong links with parents and community groups that further strengthen community cohesion. Governors are well informed and actively engaged in school life. They understand and take their responsibilities very seriously and challenge vigorously to make sure that the school's actions have a positive impact on students' learning and well-being.

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

Sixth form

The sixth form makes a positive contribution to the school and the local community. Attainment is satisfactory and students make satisfactory progress, although there is variation between subjects from year to year. Since the last inspection the curriculum has been broadened in partnership with a local college and a local consortium to offer vocational courses and a combination of academic and applied courses in addition to a range of AS and A levels. Students benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities, as well as opportunities to take on posts of responsibility in the school and the local community. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory and improving. The dedicated head of sixth form is working hard to identify and share good practice and raise standards. A review of teaching and learning and the improved use of

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assessment data to identify underachievement are beginning to have an impact.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Most of the 44% of parents who returned questionnaires to the school are happy with their children's experiences and progress at the school and believe that the school keeps students safe. Inspection evidence supports the parents' view that the school provides good care and support and helps their children to make good progress. There were supportive comments about the school's leadership and the way in which they are kept informed about their children's progress. Most parents also say that teaching at the school is good, and that their child is well prepared for the future. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the promotion of healthy lifestyles but inspection evidence showed that this area of the school's work was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Edmonton County 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 699 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1623 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	193	31	373	60	33	5	11	2
The school keeps my child safe	171	28	384	62	46	7	9	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	236	38	332	53	35	6	6	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	175	28	363	58	61	10	5	1
The teaching is good at this school	126	20	400	64	50	8	11	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	108	17	370	60	104	17	6	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	92	15	362	58	127	20	9	1
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)	160	26	345	56	7	11	6	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	125	20	371	60	82	13	7	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	154	25	351	57	58	9	29	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	85	14	360	58	90	14	21	3
The school is led and managed effectively	110	18	399	64	58	9	11	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	188	30	344	55	53	9	8	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 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.



20 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Edmonton County School, Enfield EN1 1HQ

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. We were very pleased to see that you get on well together and value and respect each other's differences. The school works hard to make sure that everyone has an equal chance to make the most of their education by providing opportunities to study a range of subjects at different levels and to take responsibility as student leaders. The clubs and activities help you learn valuable skills for your future life as well as being great fun and a chance to show how talented you are. The school encourages you to have high aspirations for the future.

We were impressed with the improvements that have taken place since the last inspection. The GCSE examination results for 2009 were the best ever and show that the school is helping you to make good progress and achieve your potential. The results show that the progress you make varies between subjects. We have asked the school to improve the teaching in the subjects where examination results are not as high as they could be. You can help by trying to produce your best work in all lessons.

Teaching has improved too and we saw some lessons which were outstanding. We also watched a few lessons where the teaching was not so interesting or well planned. The teaching in the sixth form is not quite as good as it is in the rest of the school. We have asked the school to make sure that all teaching is matched well to your range of abilities and builds on what you already know and understand. We have asked all the teachers to give you feedback that you understand and mark your books regularly. You can help by taking notice of the comments and trying to improve your future work.

The headteacher and senior staff lead your school well and the staff and governors are committed to providing you with good levels of care and support to keep you safe, happy and healthy.

We wish you all at Edmonton a happy and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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