

# The International School and Community College, East Birmingham

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103518
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376918
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gwendoline Coates HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	675
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Will Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Garside
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Gressel Lane Tile Cross Birmingham B33 9UF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Parts of 39 lessons were observed and a similar number of teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with students, governors and staff. They observed the school's work; looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plan and minutes of governing body meetings; scrutinised students' work; and reviewed responses of the 81 parental questionnaires that were returned.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective are senior leaders in embedding ambition and maintaining morale in the face of a falling roll?
- How well do school strategies ensure all students feel safe in school, are aware of how to live a healthy lifestyle and behave well?
- To what extent are all students stretched and given the opportunity to achieve at the highest levels they are capable of?
- How well are teaching and learning monitored at subject level and to what extent is this bringing about improvements to teaching, learning and thus achievement in subjects?
- How effective is professional development in raising the quality of teaching and learning and thus achievement?

## Information about the school

The International School and Community College is a smaller than average-sized secondary school that has experienced a falling roll over recent years. Approximately half of its students are known to be eligible for free school meals, a figure that is well above the national average. Approximately 40% of students are from minority ethnic groups, with African, Pakistani and Caribbean groups being the largest. For approximately 30% of students, English is an additional language. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language are well above the national average, having increased significantly since the last inspection. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Well above average numbers of students join the school other than at the beginning of Year 7.

The school is a member of East Birmingham network of schools, and North East Schools Team. The school has specialist business and enterprise status and has achieved the full International School Award.

The school buildings are being refurbished and are expected to be ready for February 2012. As a result, at present the school is housed in restricted premises with limited space.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

Strong leadership is making a real difference to the experience and achievement of students at The International School and Community College. The clear focus given to raising expectations of what it is possible for students to achieve and tackling areas of weakness have resulted in a consistently positive trend of improvement in attainment over the last three years, from well below average to broadly average. The progress students make from their starting points is satisfactory but, like attainment, is showing consistent year-on-year improvement.

Attendance, judged to be low at the last inspection, is now high as a result of exceptionally well-focused strategies that ensure students and their parents and carers recognise that for good learning to take place, good attendance at school is a pre-requisite. Other student outcomes are improving and, other than behaviour, all are now judged to be good. Although permanent and fixed-term exclusions have fallen significantly over recent years, a small minority of lessons are still affected by low level disruption and, around the school, a few students fail to take responsibility for their actions.

Although in a majority of the lessons observed teaching and assessment were judged to be good, in too many lessons they were still only satisfactory, with students failing to make good progress in their learning. In a few lessons, behaviour management was not being tackled sufficiently effectively, which slowed the pace of learning for some students. In addition, teachers did not always match teaching and learning activities sufficiently closely to the needs of all students. Good opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills were not evident in all lessons. As a result of these weaknesses, the quality of teaching and assessment are judged to be satisfactory. However, the school's own monitoring, which inspectors judged to be both accurate and rigorous, indicates that quality is improving rapidly.

A falling roll, extensive inherited financial problems and the on-going structural difficulties of housing the school in limited space while a new building is being constructed, have posed significant challenges. Despite this, leaders are highly effective in raising expectations, in embedding ambition and in maintaining morale among staff and students, while at the same time bringing about year-on-year improvement in attainment. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what the main priorities are for its further development. This includes perceptive self-evaluation at subject level. The constraints noted above have not hindered leaders' commitment to move the school

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forward and have not slowed the pace of improvement. In fact, the opposite has occurred as a number of key judgements have crossed grade boundaries since the last inspection, indicating that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

Accelerate the rate of progress students make in order to raise further their attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 and post-16. Do this by:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good in a greater proportion of lessons, and in particular:
  - ensure that teachers consistently use teaching and learning strategies that match the individual needs of each student more closely and challenge them more effectively
  - provide opportunities for all students to engage more effectively in independent and group-based learning and encourage them to take more responsibility for their own learning both in lessons and outside of lessons
- improving behaviour so that it is at least consistently good in all lessons and around the school, and in particular:
  - ensure that all teachers implement the school's behaviour management policy consistently and effectively in all lessons, thus enabling the pace of learning for all students to be raised
  - encourage all students to take responsibility for their own behaviour both in lessons and around the school.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below average but has been increasing year-on-year. In 2011, 43% of students gained five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, compared to 20% in 2008. The progress students make from their below average starting points is satisfactory but demonstrates a positive trend of improvement over recent years, with increasing numbers of students making better than expected progress. The progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory and that made by students known to be eligible for free school meals compares well with that of all students. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds make at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress. Lesson observations indicate that most students have good attitudes to learning, work diligently and show interest.

Pupils say they feel safe because of the school's zero tolerance towards bullying,

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racism and other forms of harassment, and because staff are always available 'to sort things out'. Students have a good understanding of how a healthy lifestyle contributes to their personal well-being. They are supported in this by the breakfasts and healthy lunches provided, the range of physical and sporting activities on offer, a good personal, social and health education programme and the weekly 'Doc Shop', which provides students with access to specialist counsellors, therapist and nurses.

Many students take on roles of responsibility and leadership within the school. For example, the school council is active, effective and 'listened to' and a working party of students meets weekly to discuss plans for the new school and develop ideas for its launch. All students take the short course GCSE in religious education, which enables them to develop their understanding of spiritual and moral issues. They participate in a range of cultural activities. The multicultural nature of the student population is used effectively to promote the cultural and religious awareness and understanding of all students.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Very good relationships between students and teachers exist; one student noted that, 'Teachers are the best thing about this school.' Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to enliven lessons. In many lessons, effective questioning of students was used not only to confirm understanding but also to encourage students to think deeply, thus promoting good learning. Weaker aspects, apparent in some lessons, include:

<sup>1</sup> 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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- insufficient emphasis on encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning and too few opportunities to work individually or in groups
- a failure to match teaching and learning activities to the individual needs of each student so that not all students are given the opportunity to make good progress from their starting points
- a failure to deal effectively with poor behaviour, particularly among less able groups of students, and as a result a slowdown in the pace of learning.

Students know their targets and most understand what they need to do to improve on their current work because marking is accurate and feedback is mainly good.

The curriculum is fit for purpose and meets all statutory requirements. Students in Key Stage 4 are offered pathways that provide opportunities to achieve the English Baccalaureate or to follow a more vocational programme, according to individual needs. A range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are offered. Activities related to the school’s business and enterprise specialism ensure that there is good focus on developing students’ broader work-related skills and economic well-being. The school is fully aware of the developments needed to enhance the curriculum further and planning in this area is linked closely to the move to a new school building in 2012.

Transition arrangements ensure that all new students, whether pupils moving up from primary schools or young people joining the school at other times, including those from other countries whose English language skills might be at an early stage, are made to feel welcome and are very well supported. Academic and pastoral monitoring systems are well integrated so that students are provided with excellent support that takes full account of their individual needs. There are many striking examples of how the school is helping the most vulnerable students overcome significant barriers to their education. Good contact with parents and carers and strong partnerships with external agencies contribute significantly to the quality of this provision. The impact of the outstanding provision for care, guidance and support can be seen in the significant improvement in students’ attendance and the significant reduction in exclusions over recent years.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Strong senior leadership that consistently communicates high expectations and

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galvanises enthusiasm and commitment is ensuring that everyone - staff, students, parents and carers - understands how they can contribute to improving students' achievement. Ambitious targets are raising aspirations. Students say that senior leaders are accessible and friendly, but tough on underperformance. As a result of very good support from senior leaders, middle leadership in the school is strong. Effective professional development contributes to this, with valuable succession planning identifying, developing and empowering aspiring leaders. Senior and middle leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. The regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning results in relevant and effective professional development, such as the use of data and effective questioning, both of which have improved teaching and benefited learning.

Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities appropriately and have a good understanding of the financial issues facing the school. The school adopts recommended good practice across all areas of its work in relation to safeguarding. The school's partnerships with other organisations, including primary and secondary schools, local businesses and external agencies, contribute well to enhancing provision and the personal experiences and achievements of students. It has a positive relationship with parent and carers and has good strategies in place to liaise with them about their children's achievements, well-being and development

The school is ambitious both for individual groups of students and for each one of its students. Actions to promote equality of opportunity are resulting in sustained improvement in attainment and in the participation of individual groups of students in the life of the school. The school is aware of where further actions should be directed and, for example, now has a stronger focus on encouraging the most-able students to achieve at the highest grades. Since the last inspection, the school has seen its cohort of students change from mainly White British to an ethnically diverse mix of students. This change has been dealt with exceptionally well and as one student said, 'This school celebrates the difference in everyone.' A huge range of activities and strategies support the school's efforts in relation to promoting community cohesion both within the school, in its local community and more widely in the international community. Its recent success in achieving the full International Schools Award contributes to this.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>

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

## Sixth form

Although attainment at GCE AS and A level is below average, the majority of students make at least expected progress from their below average starting points. Sixth form students have good opportunities to develop wider skills, take responsibility and contribute to their school and wider community. For example, they are involved as literacy mentors with Year 9 students and sports leaders in local primary schools, they can access opportunities to improve their driving skills, join the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and take a first aid course.

Much teaching is good and the very strong relationships that exist between teachers and students encourage students to have confidence in their own abilities. However, students are not always encouraged to provide extended answers in response to teachers' questioning and thus to develop higher level oral skills. Excellent and highly personalised support is provided for each student. Accurate marking and detailed written feedback ensure that students understand how to improve their work and meet their targets. As a result of the financial constraints facing the school, significant restructuring of the sixth form curriculum has taken place. This has involved the removal of an extensive range of resource-intensive level 2 vocational courses, which students now access in other schools in the local network. The small range of GCE subjects and level 3 vocational courses offered meets the needs of the current small number of students in the sixth form.

Detailed tracking of progress includes monthly reviews of each student's performance and appropriate and timely interventions are provided when underachievement is identified. Self evaluation in the sixth form reflects the quality of that in the main school. Plans to build student numbers and improve the curriculum are linked to the move to a new school building in 2012.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
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	2

## Views of parents and carers

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The number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was relatively small compared to the average response rate in secondary schools. Those who did respond were overwhelmingly positive about the school, with 99% judging that the school keeps their children safe and 98% indicating that overall they are happy with the education their children get at the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The International School and Community College, East Birmingham 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 675 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	33	50	62	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	32	40	48	59	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	38	47	41	51	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	42	42	52	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	38	47	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	38	45	56	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	23	57	70	1	1	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)	31	38	44	54	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	28	35	46	57	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	33	45	56	6	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	33	45	56	7	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	33	41	45	56	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	41	51	38	47	2	2	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



18 November 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of The International School and Community College, East Birmingham, Birmingham, B33 9UF**

Thank you for the courtesy that many of you showed to us during our visit. We judged your school to be satisfactory overall. Attainment at the end of Year 11 has increased regularly over recent years and is now broadly average. The progress you make is satisfactory and, like attainment, is increasing year-on-year. Your attendance is now high - grade 1. This is the top grade that Ofsted can give, so well done! The extent to which you feel safe, understand how to live healthy lifestyles, contribute to the school and local community and develop work-related skills are all good. However, behaviour overall is still only satisfactory because too many of you misbehave in lessons and/or around the school. This was also one of the reasons why teaching was judged to be satisfactory rather than good. While the curriculum you receive meets your needs, the care, guidance and support you are given is outstanding. Your school is well led. Leaders, teachers and support staff have your very best interests at heart and work very hard to ensure that you reach your potential. To support this, I have asked the headteacher and staff to quicken the rate of progress you make in order to raise further your attainment by:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good in a greater proportion of lessons
- improving behaviour so that it is at least consistently good in all lessons and around the school.

The final point is aimed at those of you who fail to remain on task during lessons and/or misbehave around the school. You can make a difference to the school and to your fellow students if you make the effort to behave. All of you - please continue to attend school regularly, pay attention in lessons and be the best that you can be.

Best wishes and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gwendoline Coates  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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