



Seven Kings High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102856
Local Authority Redbridge
Inspection number 286509
Inspection date 21 February 2007
Reporting inspector Lauren Ovenden HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Ley Street
School category	Community		Ilford
Age range of pupils	11–18		IG2 7BT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8554 8935
Number on roll (school)	1401	Fax number	020 8518 2975
Number on roll (6th form)	462		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Pat Green
		Headteacher	Sir Alan Steer
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002		

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Seven Kings High School is a large school and has a large sixth form. It serves a diverse community with many students of minority ethnic heritage. Approximately three quarters of the school population speak English as an additional language, although the proportion of students who are at the early stages of learning English is very small. The amount of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and the school has a specialist centre for children with physical disabilities. The school has specialist science and technology status and since 2006, has specialist status for languages. It is a training school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Students' prior attainment on entry to the school is average and they make outstanding progress to achieve substantially higher than average results in national examinations in Year 9 and in their GCSEs. It is a striving school, where there is a shared sense of ambition for all students. All students achieve so well because teaching and learning is of a consistently high standard and the curriculum offered is outstanding. Teaching is characterised by the very effective learning relationships established in the classroom. Teaching provides a strong structure for learning, with careful questioning and varied teaching strategies promoting the fast acquisition of knowledge and skills. Assessment practices and the monitoring of students' progress are robust, enabling the school to support all students to achieve well. Teachers' marking provides excellent guidance about the next steps in learning. Through the courses available, students have many opportunities to develop a range of skills that prepare them for their future economic well-being. Extra-curricular activities are varied and a wide range of trips enrich the learning experience. The curriculum is adapted to meet the varying needs of individuals, for example, through the improving offer for the most able, and access to some vocational courses at GCSE and in the sixth form. The school's two specialisms have led to a significantly broader curriculum offer. The school is involved in developing language skills with local primary schools and now offers Mandarin as an additional language. There has been an expansion of the information and communication technology courses and technology courses offered, including some vocational programmes at Key Stage 4.

Underpinning the success of the school is the all-pervading atmosphere of respect between students and between them and all adults. This permeates lessons and all school life. Students feel safe at school and observe that the very rare instances of bullying are sorted discreetly and quickly. One parent commented that the school has 'an impressive response to bullying'. Students' enjoyment of all the school offers is clear; attendance is well above average, they study hard and achieve very well and behave thoughtfully at all times with consideration for others. Students' personal development is outstanding, in part because of the high levels of care, guidance and support provided by the school, but also because of the students themselves, who are motivated to engage fully in the life of the school.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed by an outstanding headteacher and a particularly strong senior team. Within the school, there is a shared sense of purpose that focuses on learning and learners. School self-evaluation is inclusive and rigorous, resulting in ambitious improvement planning. As a consequence, standards have continued to rise over the past three years, and in some aspects, this pace of improvement has been particularly rapid. For example, between 2002 and 2005, the proportion of pupils who achieved 5 A-C passes at GCSE rose 15%. Professional development opportunities, and the school's excellent capacity to improve have been recently enhanced by the acquisition of training school status. This has resulted in more opportunities for the dissemination of best practice, raising the quality of teaching

and learning. The school works very effectively with a range of partners to support the achievement and well-being of its learners and learners in other schools.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding in all respects. It provides students with two years of excellent teaching combined with superb academic and personal care, guidance and support. Standards are very high in the sixth form and students' achievement is outstanding. The school's specialism is reflected in the very large numbers of students who study science subjects and attain high grades. In 2006, for example, over 70 students took chemistry A level of whom almost 75% gained A or B grades. Over 80% of students who took mathematics attained these high grades, as did those taking other subjects such as sociology and art. Students achieve extremely well and develop into thoughtful and mature young adults. They relish the numerous opportunities, especially in the sixth form, in which they can take responsibility, and help people in the community. Sixth formers, trained as buddies, provide valuable kindness and guidance to younger students and those new to the sixth form. Developing independent learning, sixth form students prepare lessons for themselves and younger students. Leadership and management of the sixth form are as effective as in the main school. The courses offered are predominantly A levels, reflecting students' aspirations and interests. Over 90% of them continue into higher education, especially in medicine and the sciences.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school provides outstanding value for money and there are no significant areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students make exceptionally good progress at the school and standards have been consistently high for a number of years. In Key Stage 3 students make strong progress and a high proportion of students achieve the highest levels in maths, science and English in national examinations. Achievement is also high in information and communication technology by the end of Year 9.

In 2006, every student in Year 11 achieved at least one pass at GCSE and 92% achieved 5 or more A-C grade passes, which is significantly higher than average. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make similarly exceptional progress. As one parent commented, 'I am very happy with my child's progress'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher's respect for students and enjoyment of their company is mirrored by all staff. As a technician observed 'You just walk through the door and feel it'. Students' understanding of other faiths and cultures, as well as moral and social education, is developed very well through the citizenship, personal, social and health education programme and through the school's celebration of its multi-ethnic mix. As one student observed, 'We have cultural education without even knowing it'.

Students are exceptionally well aware of the importance of taking exercise and eating healthily and often make constructive comments about the canteen; they feel their views are respected although the school is keen to strengthen how it hears their views. As they progress through the school they are given increasing opportunities to contribute to the school community, for example, Year 10 students help younger students in mathematics, students participate in focus group discussions about learning and act as school council representatives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning is outstanding because it is of a consistently high standard and this enables students to make excellent progress over time. As one parent remarked, 'quality teaching challenges all students.' Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. However, additional adults in the classroom are not always utilised fully to support learning. Teaching is fast-paced and effective questioning is used to check on learning. Marking is regular and gives very good guidance about how to improve. This is supported by student assessment of their own learning and that of their peers, helping them discuss what the next steps to learning are.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students discuss many citizenship, social and moral issues in their drama lessons, which they have twice a week. These lessons add to the enjoyment of Year 7 and support student creativity, contributing to their respect for others and considerate behaviour. The sixth form general education programme is developing into a well-crafted course covering many of life's big questions. In Years 10 and 11, students choose from subjects beyond the National Curriculum such as sociology and business studies.

In response to students' comments, a vocational construction course and GCSE textiles have been added recently. The sixth form curriculum has also been adapted to students' interests and aptitudes by the inclusion of Open University units for the most able and BTec science and business studies for those who wish to stay on for one year.

Students appreciate the rich offer of extra-curricular activities ranging from sport, drama and music to debating in the sixth form. A few students would appreciate more lunch time activities. There are numerous, interesting and enjoyable trips and visits for all years.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

All child protection procedures are fully in place and observed meticulously. A significant feature of the high quality care students receive is that year heads and tutors know them very well so they detect, early on, when particular help is needed. Parents are very supportive and the school is working to develop closer communication, for example, through the school intranet and additional staff. The quality of care for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is exceptionally effective, as acknowledged nationally. These students are as fully integrated into all lessons and activities as possible.

The school has carefully refined the amount of data it collects about students' performance, interpreting statistics with the specific aim of monitoring progress and evaluating whether it is good enough. When this is not the case, academic and/or pastoral support and encouragement swing into action, keeping students focused and learning. The school is rightly proud of its various 'safety nets' which deal with students' problems quickly and effectively. The development of the school's extended provision is creating further benefits, such as a breakfast club.

Excellent careers advice starts early, both for those wishing to stay into the sixth form or go elsewhere. Students speak very positively about the project they undertake in the summer before joining the school, which helps them to prepare for the new term. Advice about higher education for sixth formers is realistic and well-considered. Provision for work-related learning is good and the school is developing this well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides strong and inspirational leadership. He is very ably supported by an active governing body. The school leadership team are involved in a range of projects and activities in partnership with external groups that support improvements in learning and the professional development of staff. For example, a mathematics project with a university developed

new teaching approaches and the school co-chairs the Redbridge Networked Learning Community, which has included a group focusing on developing assessment opportunities that develop students' learning.

The school robustly monitors its own performance, through departmental monitoring and reviews of key stages. It has a good awareness of the quality of teaching and learning through regular lesson observations. Roles and responsibilities are well-defined and professional development opportunities have further enhanced the effectiveness of managers at all levels.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to some of you and hearing your views. It was pleasing to hear that you enjoy and are proud of your school. The inspection team were particularly impressed with the confident and well-crafted responses to our questions, and the pleasant and respectful atmosphere around the school.

We judged your school to be outstanding in all respects. You achieve very high standards, in Year 9 examinations, GCSEs and in the Sixth Form. You make exceptional progress for many reasons. There is consistent, high quality teaching and learning. You are motivated to learn and contribute well to your lessons. The relationships between you and your teachers are very good, and there is a calm, respectful and considerate atmosphere around the school. The support and advice given to help you improve your work is sharply focused, which helps you to understand what you need to do to improve. Those of you who need additional help are very well supported and there is a wide range of opportunities for the more able to extend their understanding.

Whilst at the school, you have excellent opportunities to develop as individuals and to increase your understanding of how to keep safe and well. Overall, the school prepares you exceptionally well for your future lives. Seven Kings is also a caring school, and as some of you told us, this is a school that knows its students well and wants them to achieve all they can. We judged that the school is exceptionally well led and managed; your teachers and school leaders are ambitious for you. They have identified several ways that they want to improve the work of the school to make it even better and have detailed plans about how they will achieve this. The inspection team judged that there were no significant areas for improvement.

With best wishes for the future,

Lauren Ovenden HMI

Lead inspector