

Swanlea School

31 Brady Street, London, E1 5DJ

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Given their starting points students make outstanding progress and achieve above average attainment, especially in English.
- The school is very well led and managed. Senior leaders have a very strong and inclusive vision based on supporting and challenging all pupils to achieve well in a welcoming and safe environment.
- Middle leaders are fully included in management processes. They carry out their roles confidently and very effectively.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress. Students who speak English as an additional language are also included in the provision and make exceptional progress.
- The large number of students eligible for the pupil premium make outstanding progress. Funding is very well deployed to enhance their learning and their achievement is exceptionally high.
- Teaching over time is outstanding. Teachers always expect the best from students and effective monitoring keeps teaching at a high standard. The use of questioning, the quality of resources and the timing of learning activities are particularly strong.
- The school's provision for the teaching of literacy is outstanding.
- Very comprehensive and effective opportunities are provided for students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. As a result, students work very well together and relationships are excellent.
- Governors effectively monitor and support the school's work. They have engaged in a range of appropriate training to support them in their work.
- Students' behaviour is of a very high standard and they feel happy and secure at school. Attendance is above average and improving.
- The sixth form is outstanding. This is because it is well managed and students' progress is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, 34 of which were joint observations with the headteacher or senior staff. They also conducted a learning walk to judge the quality of social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Inspectors visited three assemblies, two registrations, the start of school, break time, lunchtime and the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and an analysis of pupil achievement, staff performance management, school self-evaluation, child protection and development planning.
- They also scrutinised the school's processes for evaluating the quality of teaching, minutes of the governing body and a range of school policies.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised their work in lessons.
- The response to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) was insufficient for analysis and no staff questionnaires were completed. However, inspectors did gain the views of parents and carers informally through correspondence and in discussion with a parent governor. Views of staff were received from relevant meetings.
- While the school runs a wide range of clubs, none took place during the days of the inspection as a range of special events such as school trips were being organised.
- A range of end-of-year activities which needed to be completed before the start of Ramadan resulted in inspectors being only able to observe a limited number of lessons, especially on day one of the inspection. For example, on the first day, lessons only took place for Years 7 and 10 and a very limited number in Year 12. On day two, lessons only took place for Years 8 and 9, with some Year 12 students also having lessons.

Inspection team

Michael Merva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gill Walley

Additional Inspector

Kewal Goel

Additional Inspector

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school.
- Pupils come from mainly one ethnic group. Bangladeshi pupils are the overwhelming majority.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. This includes pupils eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority. There are no pupils from service families in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is also above average.
- A well-above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- The school is part of a sixth form consortium with two other neighbouring secondary schools.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club and a range of morning, lunchtime and after-school clubs including support with homework, literacy, individual subjects and a range of sporting activities. There is also very comprehensive provision for music.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase achievement and the proportion of outstanding lessons by making sure that:
 - all students are given the time and opportunity to respond to teachers' comments in their exercise books
 - there is consistently effective use of additional adults in all lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Given their starting points, students make outstanding progress both over time and currently at the end of Year 11. They join the school with levels of achievement well below average and a significant proportion speak little or no English. Progress in English and mathematics is rapidly improving.
- English is a particular strength of the school and attainment over time and currently is well above national expectations. Mathematics is not as strong as English but, based on early entry results for GCSE, is rapidly improving. The use of early entry does not limit the potential of the most-able students who go on to achieve well.
- The school's provision for literacy is outstanding. A very clear policy makes sure that literacy skills are well woven across the curriculum resulting in very high achievement. Students are confident, fluent readers.
- The large numbers of students eligible for the pupil premium make outstanding progress over time. Carefully planned strategies including additional support in lessons and the use of specialist staff result in students reaching above-average standards.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium join the school with attainment which is much lower than that of their peers. At the end of Year 11 in 2012, they exceeded the attainment of their peers in English by more than one third of a grade. In mathematics their attainment was in line with that of their peers. The school's current support strategies are making sure that they are making as fast or faster progress than their peers so that there continue to be no gaps in their attainment.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and Bangladeshi students, make outstanding progress. Effective intervention strategies and rigorous tracking make sure students' needs are well supported.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium makes sure that students are quickly put onto programmes such as support with reading to meet their needs and improve their skills to learn well.
- Sixth form achievement is outstanding. A-level results are above average over time and are continuing to improve. The courses available through the consortium provide students with a wide range of choice.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding and continuing to improve. The use of questioning is a strong feature of teaching. In a Year 9 geography lesson, skilful questioning by the teacher meant that all students were able to access the meaning of key geographical concepts.
- Students are given ample opportunity to learn both independently and from each other. In a Year 9 physical education lesson on exercise, students were able to shape their own learning and work together to make outstanding progress.
- Reading is very well taught across the school. Students are provided with a wide assortment of chances to develop their literacy, such as reading sessions built into science and mathematics lessons and careful employment of subject-specific key words. The library is given a high priority and its use has steadily increased over time.
- Assessment and marking are secure. In lessons students review each other's work and these opportunities are well used to consolidate learning. Books are clearly marked and students are aware of their current learning and how to improve. However, on occasions they are not given sufficient time to react fully to teachers' recommendations for improving their work.
- Additional adults are often well deployed to support students' learning. They are used

particularly well when supporting literacy. In a Year 9 English lesson, vulnerable students were well supported through effective questioning to enhance learning. However, this is not consistent across the school. In some instances, the work of additional adults lacks focus and as a result, their use is not completely effective.

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. It is well monitored by the head of sixth form and subject leaders. Successful strategies include rich questioning and independent discussion to motivate and encourage students to think for themselves. It is also characterised by the use of relevant current events to challenge students' thinking and understanding. In a Year 12 mathematics lesson on algebraic fractions, effective questioning supported students' independent and collaborative skills to access the topic fully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students always come to lessons ready to learn. They fully engage in a range of challenging tasks and work extremely well together.
- Students' behaviour around school is outstanding. They are very friendly, welcoming and courteous. They move to their lessons calmly and with purpose. Punctuality to lessons is excellent. Behaviour at break and lunchtimes is very orderly, calm and well supported by adults. The breakfast club provides a calm and supportive start to the school day.
- Parents and carers value the school's very safe environment. One parent or carer said, 'Any trouble in the area is not brought into school.' They feel the students are very happy in school. They particularly value the school's emphasis on academic achievement and the support it provides.
- Behaviour is very well managed by the school. A revised behaviour policy has simplified processes to ensure understanding and effectiveness. There is a clear balance between rewards and sanctions and good behaviour is celebrated in a variety of ways. Behaviour incidents are carefully monitored and interventions are effective. As a result there have been no permanent exclusions over time and fixed-term exclusions are below average.
- Students are fully aware of what constitutes bullying and of its different forms, including cyber and homophobic bullying. Their understanding is supported through the curriculum, assemblies and events such as anti-bullying week. They believe that bullying is rare, know where to go when it occurs and are confident it will be effectively dealt with.
- Students feel very safe at school and enjoy their lessons. They are aware of where they are in their learning and how to improve. They believe challenging work enables them to make maximum progress. They are also very loyal and proud of their school.
- Students are able to express their views through an effective school council and initiatives such as the pupil-leadership programme allow students to take responsibility for their actions and to support each other.
- Attendance is above average and improving well. Students are very punctual both coming to school and to lessons. Strong links with parents and carers help to secure this improvement.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school's very welcoming and supportive ethos and vision based on respect for all means that all students are valued. This, coupled with its strong emphasis on academic achievement, creates an environment where students are able to thrive. The successful emphasis on raising achievement, the current improvement in standards and high attainment in Key Stage 3 demonstrate a clear capacity to improve.
- The headteacher and senior leaders implement clear strategies and efficient systems to positively impact on students' learning. Middle leaders fully understand their roles within the management structure and carry out their responsibilities with confidence and rigour.

- Comprehensive systems check the quality of teaching. All school managers are fully involved and governors monitor the quality of teaching at appropriate intervals. Underperformance is quickly identified and support carried out to secure improvement. The school's monitoring systems are an integral part of its performance management process which includes salary enhancements and training opportunities.
- Light-touch support is provided by the local authority for this outstanding school. It is currently offering support with transition into Year 7, moderation of assessment and reading.
- The curriculum carefully and imaginatively meets the specific needs of the students. Literacy is a very strong learning feature across the school. For example, uniquely structured reading sessions are included in science and mathematics lessons in Key Stage 3. This helps prepare students well for the rigorous range of academic subjects taught in Key Stage 4.
- Opportunities are provided to enrich students' learning experiences. Enterprise opportunities with businesses in the nearby City of London are robust and students receive public speaking training. Year 7 pupils are provided with chances to participate in less common sports such as fencing and archery. The school's very comprehensive music provision enables students to perform in for example, an orchestra, a jazz band or a dance piece.
- The school is very successful in engaging parents and carers. For example, the headteacher provides an open coffee morning every Monday for parents and carers. Parents and carers also receive a range of support in subjects and literacy to help their children learn. Support workers also are available to help with special educational needs and topical issues such as drug and alcohol abuse.
- Opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural education are very strong. An example of this was the Holocaust Memorial event which allowed students to ponder moral and spiritual issues. The school's extensive range of visits enables pupils to both participate in and observe a wide variety of cultural activities. The sixth form provision is very well managed as part of a consortium of three schools. Links within the consortium allow pupils to engage in a wide range of courses and events. Monitoring processes including attendance are robust and accountability at all levels of leadership is very evident. The result is that students have greater opportunities for learning across the consortium and achievement is outstanding.
- The school fully embraces equality of opportunity for all its pupils. It is welcoming, supportive and based very strongly on mutual respect. Its identification of literacy as a major component of its curriculum supports its understanding of the need to supply essential skills within its particular student group to support its emphasis on academic success.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well and carefully monitor its work. They are fully aware of its many strengths and what it needs to do to improve further. Through their monitoring processes, governors provide effective challenge and support to the school. They regularly receive information about achievement and the quality of teaching and monitor and review it regularly. They are very clear as to how staff performance is reviewed and understand the link between pay awards and classroom practice against national standards. They are fully aware of how the funding provided through the pupil premium is employed and analyse its use and impact. Their processes to manage school finances are robust. As a result, governors ensure that funding is well used to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The governing body makes certain that the school meets its responsibility for safeguarding and scrutinises risk assessments to ensure they are fully effective. Governors have undertaken a range of training to help them become more effective in their roles.

What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	100973
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	413325

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,010
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Habib Rahman
Headteacher	Brenda Landers
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 November 2008
Telephone number	020 7375 3267
Fax number	020 7375 3567
Email address	officeadmin@swanlea.towerhamlets.sch.uk

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