

# Loxford School of Science and Technology

Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2UT

**Inspection dates** 17–18 April 2013

|                                |                      |                    |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | <b>Outstanding</b> | <b>1</b> |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Outstanding</b> | <b>1</b> |
| 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.

- This is an outstanding school which has built on the strengths identified at its previous inspection. It enables all groups of pupils to make rapid progress, particularly in Years 7 to 11.
- The headteacher is the driving force behind the school's success. Her clear vision and high ambitions for pupils and staff are supported by a highly effective senior team and a well-led and challenging governing body.
- There is a strong culture in the school that says everyone can be successful in meeting their aspirations. As one pupil said, 'I can be me.' All believe, 'They can make it happen.'
- Leaders have such a clear understanding of how well pupils are progressing that they are able to put their energy where it is most needed, particularly in the continuous drive to improve teaching, learning and achievement.
- Teachers make their lessons enjoyable and challenging for all pupils. This enables them to move learning forward rapidly, particularly in the key areas of English and mathematics. However, not all teaching is outstanding in developing pupils' ability to learn independently.
- Teachers across the school take their responsibility very seriously for developing the pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills.
- Pupils know the challenging targets they are aiming for and are carefully guided towards achieving them.
- Pupils at all levels feel very safe and secure because of the support provided through the academic and care teams in each year group and their tutors.
- The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils want to learn. They are keen, enthusiastic and have impeccable manners towards each other and adults.
- By carefully checking the progress of each pupil, the school is able to identify where additional support is needed. This might be because they have fallen behind their targets or are experiencing personal difficulties affecting their performance.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Its leadership is driving up standards as reflected in recent improvements in A-level results.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons or parts of lessons, of which 14 were joint observations with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- As there were only 27 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), inspectors also took account of the school's most recently undertaken parental survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own information on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Martin Beale, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Olson Davis                  | Additional Inspector |
| Kewal Goel                   | Additional Inspector |
| Alison Padmore               | Additional Inspector |
| Michael Sutherland-Harper    | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a very large school in which pupil numbers have risen considerably in recent years. Its sixth form is also larger than average and with rising student numbers.
- The school has been completely rebuilt since the previous inspection and a new primary school building has just been completed. This is to provide more places to cope with the increase in numbers being experienced by the local authority. The primary section has been operating in temporary accommodation for the last two years and currently has pupils up to Year 2.
- The current Year 2 was taken on at very short notice in advance of planned arrangements. Of the original 60 pupils, only 12 remain because others have left as places have become available in schools nearer their homes, while others have joined.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in four Reception classes and a new Nursery is due to open in September.
- Almost all of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with one third from families of Pakistani heritage.
- Three quarters of the pupils speak English as an additional language with a small minority at an early stage in learning the language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is well above average. This is extra money given to schools for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is high. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school is a specialist science and technology school and is a designated training school.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and develop the pupils' independence in learning further by:
  - ensuring that pupils have the time to respond to their teachers' marking and that teachers check pupils' work improves as a result
  - making sure pupils do not become overly reliant on teaching assistants, particularly in the primary phase.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- From below-average levels on entry to Year 7, all groups of pupils make excellent progress as a result of outstanding teaching. GCSE results are on an upward path and were above average in 2012. This included the proportion of pupils who gained five or more grades A\* to C, including in English and mathematics.
- Progress in science had been slower than in other subjects. However, as a result of work to improve teaching, progress has improved and attainment at GCSE and A level is rising.
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English benefit from many opportunities to speak in class and quickly become secure and confident learners. There is no significant difference in the progress made by pupils from different ethnic groups.
- The procedures for identifying disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are rigorous, so ensuring that the support they receive is well matched to their individual needs. They make rapid progress and their GCSE results are much higher than for similar pupils nationally.
- Subjects have very clear policies to support the development of literacy. In many lessons, pupils use books to provide ideas for writing and help them to develop a good argument. Teachers always make sure the meaning of unfamiliar words is clear and that pupils can use them correctly.
- Early entry for GCSE mathematics is used very thoughtfully to challenge the more-able pupils. They are able to embark on AS-level work during Year 11, but only if they have reached their GCSE target grade.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding very successfully to support eligible pupils, including through small-group work and individual tuition. In 2012, pupils supported through this funding made similarly rapid progress as others in Year 11. Their GCSE results rose and were barely one third of a grade less than other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics.
- The school makes highly effective use of the Year 7 catch-up premium to support pupils who have not reached nationally expected levels in English and mathematics by Year 6. The success of the 'nurture group' is shown by the speed at which pupils return to mainstream classes during Year 7 because of their rapid gains in reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- The school's policy is to encourage students to take courses in the sixth form that will give them the chance to enter university if that is their aim and the aspiration of their families. This means that some students on some courses may not be at the higher levels seen elsewhere. However, their achievement by the end of A level is much higher than would have been expected given their starting points.
- The progress of pupils in the primary phase has not yet consistently reached the outstanding level seen in other parts of the school. This is largely because of the very short time some pupils have spent at the school. Children progress well in Reception from skills well below those expected for their age on entry. The current Year 2 will be the first group to undergo national assessments and current school data suggest their attainment is below average.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching and put in place action to improve any that falls short of their high expectations. This accounts for the high quality of much of the teaching across all phases of the school. Teaching is invariably good and a considerable proportion is outstanding.
- A major feature of teaching is the very positive atmosphere in almost all lessons. There is a strongly established sense of purpose in which teachers can teach and learning can take place unhindered by distractions. Teachers are very skilled at gaining and retaining the pupils'

attention and keeping them focused on the task in hand.

- Teachers know the needs of individual pupils in their classes well and have high expectations of what they can achieve. They make sure their teaching and the work they provide challenge all pupils to do their very best.
- The teachers' high level of subject expertise, including in literacy and mathematics, is reflected in the way they develop the pupils' learning and confidence, the innovative and imaginative methods they adopt as well as the enthusiasm they display for their subjects. Their questioning is skilled at drawing out ideas from pupils and probing to check their understanding.
- Teachers focus sharply on helping pupils to take responsibility for their learning. To this end, pupils are regularly encouraged to evaluate their work and that of others in the class before setting targets for improvement. However, this is not entirely successful as some, particularly in the primary phase, are too reliant on the support of teaching assistants.
- Marking of work is thorough, rigorous and frequent. However, teachers do not always check that pupils have responded to their suggestions about how to improve their work. In these situations, pupils are not encouraged enough to learn more by their own, independent actions.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The determination of pupils across all year groups to do well contributes significantly to their academic success and the sense of purpose invariably seen in classrooms. They have high aspirations of what staff can help them to achieve and strive hard to meet their targets.
- The school is resolute in its action to maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality and pursues pupils with poor attendance relentlessly. As a result, attendance is above average and pupils invariably arrive at school and to lessons on time.
- Pupils thrive on the praise they are given when they do well and are aware that any misbehaviour will be picked up and dealt with very quickly. The strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and the consistency with which all staff implement procedures mean the school is very calm throughout the day.
- Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds work and socialise together in complete harmony. A strong anti-bullying culture has been established in which pupils play their part by not putting up with any incidents they see. Their view that incidents are rare and dealt with speedily is supported by school records. They are quite clear that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and the part they play in its success. They have a strong voice in the school's development, including their views being sought over the quality of teaching they experience.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She has very high expectations and is exacting and uncompromising in her quest to build on the school's success and raise attainment further across all phases. She has developed a highly effective staff team who share her ambition for the pupils' achievement and personal development and her commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.
- Pupils are set very challenging targets and their progress towards them is carefully tracked. This enables any potential underachievement to be picked up quickly and a wide range of action taken, including support funded through the pupil premium for eligible pupils.
- Teachers are continually working to improve their teaching, which accounts for why so much is of a high quality. Where concerns had been identified, such as in science, attaching expert teachers to the department has helped to point it in the right direction. Teachers just starting out in the profession quickly become highly effective through the work of the 'Training School'.
- Rigorous procedures are fully established for managing teachers' performance. Teachers are

held closely to account for the progress of pupils in their classes. The targets set for teachers are used rigorously to reward good performance.

- The local authority has adopted a 'light-touch' approach to its engagement with the school because of its strong performance. It has great confidence in leaders and governors to act rapidly on any advice given.
  - The teaching of subjects is continually reviewed and adjusted to meet the needs of each year group and individual pupils. This enables the school to provide highly positive and rich opportunities for learning, including through the wide range of clubs and other activities available for pupils. There is a specific focus in all subjects on communication, problem solving and teamwork. This approach, the focus on moral issues and the celebration of cultural values support the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all age groups.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors provide well-informed challenge to the school's leadership. They share the headteacher's vision for the school's further improvement. They assure themselves that subject development leads to higher attainment. Governors are fully aware of areas where teaching is strongest and know where further development is possible. They hold the headteacher to account for the way in which pay increases are used to reward teachers by closely linking pay to pupils' progress and achievement. Governors undertake regular training, including on understanding assessment information. This information enables them to judge accurately the school's performance in comparison to that of other schools, and promptly identify key areas for improvement. Governors are fully aware of decisions about how pupil premium funding is spent and its impact on eligible pupils. Governors meet their responsibilities, including requirements for safeguarding pupils.
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## 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

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 102853    |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Redbridge |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 400186    |

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

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | All-through        |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Community          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 4–7 and 11–18      |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed              |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed              |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 2250               |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 450                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Peter Ballard      |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | Anita Johnson      |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 2 May 2007         |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 020 8514 4666      |
| <b>Fax number</b>                             | 020 8514 6257      |
| <b>Email address</b>                          | lsst@loxford.net   |

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