

OFSTED REPORT - FEBRUARY 2003

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average 11 – 19 community comprehensive school. It has specialist status as a third phase technology college with a distinctive 'can do' philosophy which emphasises the success of every student. It has just been positioned very highly in the published national value added league table, a much deserved recognition of the very good achievement of its students due to the very good teaching they experience. There are 1,514 students on roll. It has an above average size sixth form. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is well below the national average. The school serves a very disadvantaged community which presents many challenges. Just over 41 per cent of students are eligible for free school meals, a figure significantly above the national average. Thirty one per cent of the students are included on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), a proportion significantly above the national average. Just fewer than two per cent of students have statements of special educational need, a figure in line with the national average. Ninety-three per cent of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a very high figure and well above the national average. Sixteen per cent of the students are refugees and 22 students in Years 10 and 11 are new entrants to the country. The number of students with English as an additional language (EAL), 87.4 per cent, is very high, and not far short of 200 students are at an early stage of English language learning. Fifty-seven mother tongue languages are spoken, the main languages being Urdu, Panjabi, Bengali and Gujarati. There is very high mobility amongst the student population. The school is at the cutting edge of a number of exciting local and national initiatives.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Loxford School of Science and Technology is a very good school with a number of outstanding features. Standards achieved are very good because of very good teaching and learning. All students are provided with the opportunity to succeed in this outstandingly inclusive school. The headteacher and senior leadership team provide excellent and inspirational leadership. Management is very good overall. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good achievement and above average GCSE results because of the very good teaching and learning.
- The pastoral care for students is very good.
- This is an all inclusive school which focuses on the success of every student.
- The provision for EAL is excellent.
- Standards attained at GCSE in community languages are above the national average and are impressive.
- The leadership of the headteacher and the other members of the senior leadership team is excellent.
- Financial management is excellent.
- The curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- Very good provision and excellent leadership and management in the English and information and communication technology (ICT) departments.
- The library is an excellent resource and is used very effectively to support the learning of the students.

What could be improved

- The vast majority of students in Years 10 and 11 do not receive their entitlement to religious education.
- The management of design and technology could be improved to raise standards in systems and control and resistant materials.
- More use could be made of computers to support the teaching of subjects across the curriculum.
- The accommodation could be improved.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the last inspection in February 1997 have been very good. Standards achieved in literacy across the curriculum have improved. The leadership and management of ICT have been transformed beyond recognition since then and are now excellent. The support given to students with challenging behaviour is now good. The management of vocational courses is significantly better. Provision for students' spiritual development is now good. Religious education provision in Years 10 and 11 remains unsatisfactory. GCSE results have improved very significantly since the last inspection. The leadership of the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team is now excellent. However, there are now unsatisfactory features in the management of design and technology, and this is worse than at the time of the last inspection. There have been significant improvements to the sixth form curriculum except for the fact that sixth form students still do not receive their entitlement to religious education. Although students do not experience a daily act of collective worship as at the time of the last inspection the management of such an activity would prove very difficult as it would prove nigh on impossible to get all of the students into the school hall.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by students at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	E	*	*	

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

These GCSE calculations have been arrived at by removing the significant refugee component to make the table fair.

* The 2001 average point score figures are calculated differently from previous years and so straight comparisons between 2000 and 2001 are not possible. Comparative data for 2002 has not yet been published.

Attainment on entry is well below the national average. In 2002, results in the national tests for students by the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in English and science and below the national average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools (as determined by free school meals) standards were well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. The number of five or more GCSE passes at grades A* - C in 2002 were above the national average and very high when compared to similar schools. This indicates very good achievement and explains why the school has been placed so highly in the national value added league table published for the first time this year.

Standards in English and science are below the national average in Year 9 and close to the national average in Year 11. Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average in Year 9 and in Year 11. Standards are average to above or well above average in other subjects except in French and Spanish where standards fall marginally below average in Year 9 and the resistant material and systems and control aspects of design and technology where they fall below in Year 11. In religious education the vast majority of students in Years 10 and 11 are not provided with the opportunity to reach the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus and this is an issue. In the sixth form, achievement is very good in most subjects. Standards achieved by students with SEN are good. Students with EAL achieve very good standards. Gifted and talented students achieve good standards in Years 7 to 9 and very good standards in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students are keen to learn. The majority of students are eager to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in lessons is often very good. Outside of lessons behaviour is often boisterous and a lack of courtesy to others is sometimes evident.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students' initiative and personal responsibility are very good. Race relations are excellent.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is good but many students were absent during the week of the inspection because it fell during the Eid festival.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall the quality of teaching is very good. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is good overall and in Years 10 and 11 teaching is very good overall. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. There is some excellent teaching. Teaching is very good in English in Years 10 and 11 and very good overall in science. Teaching is good in English in Years 7 to 9 and good overall in mathematics throughout the school. Some excellent teaching was seen in art and design, English, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Teaching in almost all subjects has very good features: very good subject knowledge; outstandingly good behaviour management; cracking pace; an exciting range of teaching and learning strategies; and learning outcomes which are shared with the students. The small amount of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in design and technology and geography is characterised by slow pace, lack of challenge and work not being appropriately matched to the needs of the students. Teaching of students with SEN is good overall but their needs are not met in all lessons. Teaching of students with EAL is very good and excellent. Departments are at an early stage of development of strategies to teach students identified as gifted and talented.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. All students are provided with the maximum opportunity to succeed. However, the provision for religious education for the majority of students in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and the provision for systems and control and resistant materials is weak. ICT is not used sufficiently to support the teaching of all subjects across the curriculum.
Provision for students with	Good. Although good overall the SEN policy, including significant

special educational needs	changes as a result of the new Code of Practice, has not yet been ratified by the governing body.
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Aspect	Comment
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Excellent. The leadership and management of EAL are excellent.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its students	Very good with some outstanding features. Child protection procedures are very good. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are very good. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The pastoral support plans for disaffected students at risk of exclusion are excellent. The system for dealing with racist incidents is robust. Assessment procedures are very good.

Partnership with parents/carers is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is excellent. Management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team is excellent. The leadership of middle managers is very good overall: it ranges from excellent in English, ICT and EAL to unsatisfactory in design and technology. Management systems are very good but they are not implemented consistently by all curriculum team leaders. The aims and values of the school are excellent. Strategic thinking and the whole-school planning process are excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall. The governing body meets most of its statutory responsibilities well. However, the vast majority of students in Years 10 and 11 do not have an entitlement to follow the programmes of study as set out in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and this is an unsatisfactory situation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are very good systems for monitoring and evaluating performance. The headteacher has a clear picture of the strengths and also the areas in need of improvement in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning is excellent. Teachers and learning support assistants are effectively and efficiently deployed and this makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by students. The application of the principles of best value is very good.

Despite the recruitment and retention difficulties experienced by this inner city comprehensive school the overall match of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum is good. There have been improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection but significant improvements are needed. Resources are satisfactory in most subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The very friendly atmosphere and the fact that the staff are so supportive.• The fact that their children like school.• The support given to students with EAL.• The summer school activities, particularly science.• The very good ICT equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents would like to see a halal meat option on the school dinner menu.• Some parents expressed concern about the behaviour of some students out of school in the community.• Some parents considered that communication with them could be better and that the school could work more closely with them.

Inspection findings support and agree with the parents'/carers' positive views of the school. Some students do misbehave on the way to and from school and the school does all that it can to manage this situation. The inspection team does consider that parents are justified in their concern about a lack of a halal meat option at lunchtime. However, there is considerable evidence of robust structures and systems to ensure quality communication and working in partnership with parents/carers.