

Mossbourne Community Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134693
Local Authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	341502
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Adrian Lyons HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1080
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sylvie Pearce
Principal	Sir Michael Wilshaw
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 September 2006
School address	Downs Park Road Hackney London E5 8JY
Telephone number	02085 255200
Fax number	02085 255222
Email address	mwilshaw@mossbourne.hackney.sch.uk

Age group	11-18
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Royal Exchange Buildings
St. Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 26 lessons, and held meetings with leaders and managers, teachers, students and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at the academy's policies, students' work, students' questionnaires, the academy's employment and safeguarding records, a case study of the records of contact with external agencies and 694 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at:

- the key ingredients in bringing about the academy's high standards
- the extent to which non-academic outcomes for students are as positive as students' examination performance
- the effectiveness of the newly established sixth form.

Information about the school

Mossbourne Community Academy opened in September 2004 and is now an average sized inner-city school with substantially more boys than girls. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very high, as is the proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students for whom English is not their first language is well above average and the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The academy specialises in information and communication technology (ICT). In summer 2009 the first group of Year 11 students took public examinations. In September 2009 the newly created sixth form began with a sizable group of Year 12 students. The academy is extremely heavily over-subscribed. It reflects a fully comprehensive intake drawn from the locality. The academy has a stable staff and high student stability.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

A parent summed up the academy by writing that. 'Our experience of the educational system would lead us to say that Mossbourne is an exceptional school. The leadership and staff have shown an unflinching commitment to our children in both their personal and educational development.' The academy is outstanding, but even within that category it is exceptional.

- Academic achievement is amongst the very highest in the country.
- The last inspection report found an important element in the academy's initial success was the 'highly structured systems' that were in place. These continue to be instrumental in its continuing accomplishments.
- Evidence of the positive impact of ICT in supporting teaching, learning and achievement is obvious throughout the building and in almost every lesson.
- Clear lines of accountability extend from the principal through senior and middle leaders to teaching staff and, in turn, to students. A culture of high aspirations and high expectations pervades all aspects of the academy's work. Whilst a small minority of parents find the 'no excuses' culture at times unduly severe, the large majority of parents and students, together with staff and governors, highly value the haven that is created where students can enjoy high quality learning free from disruption. By so doing the academy transforms the life chances of its students.
- Excellent behaviour around the academy is demonstrated by students' polite and orderly conduct. Children from different backgrounds get on together really well. They support one another's learning in lessons and respond enthusiastically to teaching that is very rarely less than good and very often outstanding.
- Whilst all groups of students achieve very well compared to similar groups nationally, the academy has identified that there is a gap between the average standards reached across the academy and those reached by Turkish and Caribbean heritage boys. It has identified closing this gap as a priority for its further improvement, illustrating both its commitment to continued improvement and to equality. It is clear that a word that should never be associated with the academy is 'complacent'. Leaders' understanding of the academy's strengths and areas of relative weakness is incisive and provides a firm foundation for the capacity to maintain excellence and improve still further.
- Opportunities for students to influence the running of the school are a relatively less well developed area of its work.

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What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- There are no major issues for the academy to address, but to improve further, it should involve students more fully in its decision making processes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In over half of the lessons observed by inspectors, students’ learning and progress were outstanding. In all but one of the others, the quality of learning was good. This is exceptional. Students make rapid progress because of excellent behaviour that creates a climate where lessons are entirely focussed on learning. The content of lessons stretches the most able students while generous staffing ensures that the less able students are very well supported, often in small nurture groups, and make exceptional progress. Academy students took their first public examinations in summer 2009. Eighty six per cent of students gained five GCSE passes at grades A*-C including English and mathematics. Given their starting points this represents students’ progress that places the school in the top 1% of all secondary schools in England. Students with special educational needs and/ or disabilities made even more startling progress.

Students understand what it means to conduct themselves in a safe manner with continual support from staff who are highly visible around the school throughout the day and outside the school as students make their way home. Students develop skills throughout all year groups to help them make healthy choices. Students have a strong sense of right and wrong. The mantra concerning learning recited at the start of each lesson (most impressively in Spanish in a Year 7 lesson) re-enforces their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many cultures are represented in the school in a spirit of harmony and co-operation. Students are involved in a wide range of activities both in school and the local community. Whilst their academic progress makes an enormously positive contribution to their future economic well-being, this is supplemented by their enthusiastic engagement in the many opportunities for enterprise related activities and their development of good financial understanding through the well thought-out approach to personal, health, social and economic education. Students contribute to the community through the school council and student circle but inspectors agree with students who would like to extend the ‘student voice’ further.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Taking into account:

1

1

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

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Excellent teacher knowledge, both of their subjects and of how to teach it, provides teachers with a range of strategies that meet students' learning requirements at all levels and individually. The wide range of resources available to teachers is highly effective in providing experiences that involve students in their learning and motivate them. Individual, paired, group and whole class working are used in a highly appropriate and effective manner to introduce, develop and reinforce learning. Teachers' explanations, linked to challenging questioning, involve the students in developing their ideas, ensuring that they have secure understanding of their learning.

Thorough assessment procedures give teachers and students excellent knowledge of their learning needs and so make an outstanding contribution to planning and to students' awareness of what they need to do next. Self and peer evaluation are widely and regularly used skilfully to enhance students' understanding of the ideas behind their learning, to motivate them and to enable them to support each other's learning.

The curriculum offers a wide range of courses that meet the needs and interests of students and enable them to achieve exceptionally well. Achievement is strong across a very wide range of subjects but the academy is especially proud of just how well students do in the performing arts, while modern languages are particularly popular and successful.

Students feel well supported by staff and find them approachable. Students with special educational needs and/ or disabilities are very well integrated but also receive well targeted support. Arrangements for the care of students are exemplary. Strong

¹ 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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links with external agencies promote physical, mental and sexual health and emotional well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Academy leaders and managers at every level are driven by aspirations of high achievement in both academic and personal development. They have high expectations of what their students can do, and the whole academy organisation and vision focus on providing opportunities whereby students can succeed. Governors make an exceptional contribution to the work and direction of the academy. They are passionate about providing a first-class education for their students. They are innovative in their thinking, and do not shirk from holding key people to account. The academy keeps parents and carers very closely informed about their child’s progress. It sees a complete education as being a partnership between itself and parents and carers, and this overarching vision contributes to outstanding achievement. It also sees a very important role for itself in working with local schools, and the academy is taking a leading role in working in partnership with others to raise achievement in the locality. The promotion of equality of opportunity is a fundamental driver, and the academy works very hard to eliminate barriers to success, such as its extensive enhancement and enrichment programme designed to give all students opportunities to achieve as well as possible.

The academy has a mature understanding of its role in promoting community cohesion within its local community. It identifies religious, ethnic and socio-economic issues in its strategic analysis and seeks to address them in its planning and provision. The academy deploys its resources in such a way as to result in outstanding student outcomes, and provides excellent value for money. Safeguarding procedures are very robust and are known about in the community. For example, it is well known that students wearing the distinctive academy uniform are not worth targeting for robbery as they are allowed to carry neither mobile phones nor spending money. This is an imaginative protection policy.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	1
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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

driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Sixth formers have yet to have the results from any external examinations. Therefore judgements were informed by direct observation of nine lessons as well as discussions with students and staff. In 8 of the 9 lessons observed the quality of teaching was outstanding and students made excellent progress. Teaching and progress were never less than good. In preparation for the new sixth form, staff received extensive training and strategic appointments were made of staff with strong post-16 experience. This, coupled with extending and tweaking the highly successful systems and expectations from the main school, has set the sixth form on a very secure foundation.

The same high expectations and ‘no-excuses’ culture found in the main school are apparent in the sixth form. Students’ progress is closely monitored. Already, in the first half of Year 12, students are being well guided in making university choices. The curriculum offers a broad range of subject choices including both academic and some vocational choices. The academy is already planning to adapt the curriculum further to better meet the slightly different needs and interests of the current Year 11.

Other aspects of provision such as personal development and religious and spiritual development are evolving well with students contributing ideas for opportunities to discuss moral and political issues. Students are extremely positive about the sixth form. One girl was asked about taking a gamble by joining a new sixth form with no track record. She responded that she had every confidence in it because she had been at the school from Years 7 to 11 and knew that everything it did was good.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
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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

Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

As can be seen from the table on the next page, parents and carers are very supportive of the academy and all that it offers. The number of questionnaires received was very high. Overall, the vast majority of parents feel that the academy is 'outstanding with fantastic teacher commitment above and beyond the required levels' and that the behavior policy is 'fantastic and exceptionally well written and upheld'. However, a small minority of parents dislike the policy. A small number raised particular concerns over individual students but there is a lot of evidence that the school's care for individuals is exemplary. Reservations concerning the academy's uncompromising approach to behaviour seemed to mostly found in Year 7 where the culture shock of conforming to the academy's regime is most intense.

Whilst the vast majority of parents are pleased with all aspects of the academy, 15% disagreed that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. This was the only area of the questionnaires where disagreement is significant. Against this, several parents wrote comments such as, 'Mossbourne has been an excellent school for my child...If we have come up with any problems, the school listens and sorts it out keeping the parents informed.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mossbourne Community Academy 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 inspector received 694 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1080 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	190	35%	299	54%	47	9%	7	1%
The school keeps my child safe	301	55%	232	42%	8	1%	4	1%
The school informs me about my child’s progress	259	47%	266	48%	17	3%	4	1%
My child is making enough progress at this school	308	56%	229	42%	5	1%	2	0%
The teaching is good at this school	313	57%	217	40%	12	2%	2	0%
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	219	40%	293	53%	24	4%	4	1%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	180	33%	308	56%	47	9%	4	1%
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)	238	43%	275	50%	15	3%	2	0%
The school meets my child’s particular needs	219	40%	280	51%	31	6%	6	1%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	317	58%	184	34%	30	5%	7	1%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	151	28%	288	52%	75	14%	13	2%
The school is led and managed effectively	281	51%	242	44%	13	2%	6	1%
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	316	57%	203	37%	17	3%	10	2%

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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



15 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Mossbourne Community Academy, London, E5 8JY

Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do, and for some of you completing questionnaires for us. I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. We agree that yours is an outstanding school. The results attained by last year's Year 11 were excellent. The academy expects the current Year 11 to do really well and, as a result of what we have seen, we are confident that if you continue to work hard you too will gain great results. Most of the lessons we saw were outstanding. That makes your academy very special.

We know that some of you, especially in the lower years, find the discipline to be a bit 'over the top'. Many of the older students told us that when they were younger they thought so too, but now they can really see the benefit of it and are so pleased that the academy has a culture where standards of behaviour are extremely high and where lessons are never disrupted. This is one reason why most of last year's Year 11 students stayed on to the new sixth form which has got off to an excellent start. We found that the academy is not only very strong academically but looks after you extremely well and makes an excellent contribution to your personal development.

The one area of the academy where we have suggested some improvement is in enabling you as students to contribute more to decision making. We are confident that you will engage in this.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector

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