

# Stepney Green Mathematics and Computing College

Ben Jonson Road, London, E1 4SD

## Inspection dates

1–2 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students' GCSE attainment has improved in the last few years. Results in 2013 show students make good progress from average starting points.
- Students make outstanding progress in mathematics and science.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers have high expectations, form very good relationships with students and help them achieve well.
- A harmonious and respectful environment exists at the college. Behaviour is good and students are courteous and polite.
- Students feel exceptionally safe at school. Parents and carers confirm this view. Attendance is above average and improving.
- The headteacher works closely with senior colleagues to provide a strong lead and a secure direction for the college. Teaching and achievement are now typically good in most subjects.
- Most subject leaders closely monitor the work of their teams to ensure that students are taught and achieve well.
- The sixth form is good. Students are achieving well because they follow a well-planned curriculum.
- Governors are fully committed to ensuring the school returns to its previous level of effectiveness and demonstrate high expectations of students and staff at all levels.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Some high-attaining students are not always challenged as much as they could be.
- Teachers' marking does not always help students to improve their work.
- A minority of subject leaders do not sufficiently check that teaching is of the highest standard.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 35 lessons, of which a third were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to lessons and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other school leaders and managers and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with four groups of students, representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- Additional meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, and a discussion took place with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- There were three response to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 69 responses to the staff questionnaire. Additional comments were received from parents and carers, and consideration was given to the views expressed by families in response to the school's own surveys.

## Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janev Mehmet	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector
Patricia MacLachlan	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school and is attended only by boys.
- The sixth form opened in September 2013 to both boys and girls. It works with Langdon Park, Bow, and St Paul's Way to form the Sixth Form East Partnership to enhance its provision.
- The proportion of students supported by additional pupil premium funding is well above average. In this school, this additional government funding is used to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, with almost all students coming from the Bangladeshi community.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also well above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is below that found nationally.
- The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below the national average.
- A significant number of students receive Year 7 catch-up funding.
- The college no longer enters students early for examinations.
- Sixth form students attend some additional training led by the City of London School called Sharing Academic Capital, aimed at raising standards.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Further raise the standards of teaching to match the very best in the college so that most students, especially the most able, make outstanding progress by:
  - making sure that all teachers fully stretch students of the highest ability so that work is at the right level of difficulty in order for them to achieve well
  - improving the consistency of marking so that all students have a clear understanding of how to develop their work and are able to demonstrate to their teachers that they have understood and acted on the advice given.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that all subject leaders take more direct responsibility for their departments, particularly for improving the quality of teaching and in holding teams to account for the progress of the students in their subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students achieve well in a wide range of GCSE courses. On entry to Year 7, students have average levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Many groups attain results that are significantly better than the average at GCSE.
- Following a slight fall in GCSE achievement in 2012, there has been a strong focus on raising the standards of teaching and learning. As a result, in 2013, the proportion of students securing five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics rose and exceeded the national average.
- The progress of students who left Year 11 in 2013 was outstanding in mathematics and science but was not consistently strong for all subjects, including English where some students did not show the progress they should have.
- The reasons for this dip have been identified and addressed so that both attainment and progress have improved. Detailed information presented by the school provided firm evidence to show that all groups of students in English are now making good progress across all year groups.
- Achievement in a range of subjects, including geography, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages, is improving rapidly. Results in GCSE Bangladeshi are also expected to rise.
- Until recently, there was some difference in the rate of progress made by students supported by the pupil premium and others in Year 11. In 2013, these students attained almost one third of a grade below their classmates in English and a little under one full grade below in mathematics.
- School information shows that it now uses its pupil premium funding very effectively to support eligible students. It has provided support through one-to-one tuition, subject mentors and the employment of additional teachers. This has effectively reduced the attainment gap between these students and others across all years, so that it is much smaller than that seen nationally.
- The outcomes for disabled students and those with special educational needs are close to the national average and rising in line with other students in the college. Further in-class support facilitated by some teachers would accelerate this improvement.
- More-able students are achieving high standards in many subjects, especially at Key Stage 3. However, the best practices seen within the college are not extended to all subjects to support and challenge this group of learners.
- The achievement of those students from minority ethnic groups, most of whom are Bangladeshi and speak English as an additional language, is close to average and improving. Many join the school late and achieve well given their starting points.
- Reading and writing are promoted well and literacy is strengthening across the college. In Year 7, catch up funding is used to provide extra literacy and numeracy support within lessons and through after-school clubs. Students can be seen to 'drop everything and read' as part of planned tutorial work to develop their skills and build confidence.
- Scrutiny of students' books and assignments show that they take pride in their work. Writing has improved and students self-correct spellings. Listening and speaking skills are developed well in class during discussions.
- The school provides well for students at AS level. Current levels of achievement are high and the progress of students in mathematics, science and computing is particularly strong.
- The college has no plans to enter students early for GCSE examinations this year.
- Sixth form students achieve well because of the training led by the City of London School.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Good teaching helps students to achieve well in most subjects.
- Teachers expect much of their students and there is a very positive climate that encourages good learning in the college. Most teachers provide a variety of interesting activities carefully sequenced to enable the students to learn what was intended and make at least good progress.
- Most teaching ensures that students gain new knowledge and skills by being busy and active in lessons, finding things out for themselves or talking about their work with their classmates. Very effective learning was observed in a Year 9 science lesson where students worked eagerly in groups, thinking deeply not only about their own ideas but also being open to the contributions of others.
- Teachers have high expectations. Students are appreciative of the way in which they are encouraged, supported and challenged to achieve their best in most lessons. However, the most-able students do not do as well as the college expects them to in all subjects, because teaching does not always challenge them enough.
- Teachers are quick to spot and put right any misunderstandings that students may have with notable impact on the quality of learning. For example in mathematics, teachers frequently check learning from the previous lesson and, as misunderstandings are uncovered during the lesson, explain the tasks very carefully.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support students' learning. Students with special educational needs feel that they are supported well in their learning. Teachers act on individualised plans to provide the appropriate support to help students make good progress.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to students, although very effective in some classes, lack consistency across the college. Not all teachers provide clear enough advice for students about how to further improve their work. Teachers do not always make sure that students follow up this advice by applying it and showing their teachers that they have understood.
- Students in the sixth form have very positive attitudes to their studies and confidence in their ability to succeed. Teachers have an excellent awareness of examination requirements so that students have a very good understanding of what they need to do to be successful.
- Teachers are very conscientious and highly committed. They create good relationships in lessons throughout the school, so that the vast majority of students enjoy and take an active part in learning.

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

- Behaviour of students is good. There is a positive atmosphere around the college. Students conduct themselves well and are friendly, respectful, courteous and helpful to one another. The college is a happy place where students get on well with each other. Movement up and down the cramped stairwells is orderly.
- Attitudes to learning in class are usually positive. Students cooperate well and are mutually supportive of one another. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in some lessons, students are less than enthusiastic in their learning.
- Exclusion rates are well below the national average and falling. Sometimes the behaviour of a few students falls below the college's high expectations. The college is dealing with this very small minority of badly behaved students through close monitoring and intervention and, as a result, there has been some improvement in their behaviour over time.
- Vulnerable students say that they trust their teachers and have confidence to speak to them if they have a problem.
- Attendance overall is improving and is above average currently. Punctuality is sometimes a concern and heads of year support tutors' work with families to help students improve this.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Parents and carers confirm this and students say they feel very safe.
- Students have a detailed understanding of the different types of bullying, including prejudice-based and cyber bullying. Students have a good awareness of how to remain safe when using

the internet.

- Parents and carers agree with their children and say that they are happy and that they feel safe. They also say the school makes sure that students are well behaved and the college deals effectively with bullying.
- Instances of bullying and racist incidents are infrequent. The good work of the governors and the headteacher with the Somali families is testimony to the college's commitment to ensuring that the college remains a harmonious learning community.
- Students say they enjoy working at the college and all are extremely proud to be members of it. Sixth form students are particularly strong in their support for the college and provide very positive role models for younger pupils. They are very appreciative of the support and guidance they receive for their personal development and value highly the very positive relationships with staff.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher's vision for the college and his ambition for the success of all students are shared by governors and staff. He has been the driving force behind improvements that have taken place. The senior leadership team continues to ensure helping the quality of teaching return to its previously highly effective levels.
- The school's self-evaluation is reliable but does not focus enough on students' achievement.
- Leaders and governors know their school very well and have correctly identified the progress of the more able and those students in receipt of the pupil premium as a priority. Effective actions have resulted in marked improvements in many areas, especially at Key Stage 3.
- Subject leaders recognise their responsibility for improving the performance of their teams. However, a minority of subject leaders do not directly monitor the quality of teaching as often as they might or hold teams to account for the progress of the students. Governors and senior leaders hold them rigorously to account by for the improvements in the achievement of their students.
- Procedures for managing staff performance and decisions about salary progression are robust. These procedures ensure that most teaching is consistently good. The challenge now is to eradicate any teaching that requires improvement and increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding.
- There is a very effective programme of professional development in place for the on-going improvement of teaching and learning and leadership development. Opportunities to share best practice between subject heads and enable them to more directly assess the impact of teachers' work in the classroom will prove beneficial. The partnership work with the City of London School called 'Sharing Academic Capital' aimed at raising standards in the sixth form is exemplary.
- The curriculum has recently been revised to better serve the needs of students of different abilities. More time has been devoted to support the development of literacy, numeracy and communication skills in all year groups. It is too early to see the full impact of these changes, but the school's own tracking shows that this is contributing significantly to students' higher levels of achievement at Key Stage 4.
- The sixth form curriculum is well matched to students' interests and capabilities and provides a narrow range of academic A-level courses for the moment. Excellent plans are in place to work with partner schools to expand the provision and offer a wider range of both academic and vocational courses to mixed groups of students.
- The preparation and planning for the new sixth form has been outstanding. Tracking of students' progress is very effective and interventions to support them are excellent. Collaboration with other providers ensures that all students are achieving well. Students speak very highly of the support and guidance they receive and are great ambassadors for the success of this new venture.
- There is a vast range of extra-curricular activities including sporting, cultural, international and educational visits that enhance students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Students have raised monies for local Muslim charities and projects abroad including good causes in the Hinti, Gaza and the Congo. This is a key strength of the college.

- The college communicates very well with parents and carers and attendance at consultation evenings and academic review events are high. Parents and carers are generally committed, interested and supportive of the school's goals. The vast majority would recommend the school to another parent or carer and believe that the school is led and managed well.
- The local authority provides a high level of challenge to the college and gives it good support in helping determine its strategic direction. Local authority officers take an active part in setting the Headteacher's targets so that all staff at the college work to meet the needs of all their students and strive to secure the aspirational targets set. Procedures for keeping students safe and secure are fully in place and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well established and highly ambitious for the college. They take steps to equip themselves effectively for their role and provide appropriate support and challenge to the leadership of the college. The Chair of the Governing Body, working with the headteacher, was instrumental in resolving issues that arose within the college community. They understand the college's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in gauging the quality of teaching. For example, they identified that gifted and most able as the group need to develop and have set this as a priority. Teachers' performance is linked to salary progression and student achievement at all levels. The governing body has supported the headteacher in taking robust and effective action where there has been underperformance. A good example is in English where standards are now rising rapidly. Governors are keenly aware of how the college performs compared to others. Members of the governing body have significant expertise, especially in finance. They have been focused this year on the achievement of students eligible for extra funding and can provide good evidence for the impact of the college's work on closing the gap.

## 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>	100969
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	440935

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	865
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	21
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Shahid Ali
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paramjit Bhutta
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12–13 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7790 6361
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