

# Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Language College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100457
<b>Local Authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	307394
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	990
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Corinne Rechais
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Josephine Dibb
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Risinghill Street off Penton Street London N1 9QG
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7689 5020
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7833 3602

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average. It has been designated as a specialist language college. Almost nine tenths of the girls come from minority ethnic backgrounds and over two thirds speak English as an additional language. The proportion of girls eligible for free school meals is higher than is usually found. The proportion identified with specific, moderate, behavioural and emotional needs is average. The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is high. The school has gained the 'Healthy Schools Award', 'Sportsmark', 'Basic Skills Award', 'International Schools Award', 'Leading Edge Status' and 'Artsmark Gold'.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson is an outstanding school in which each and every pupil really does matter. The exceptional care, guidance and support provided by the school are real strengths. Parents praise the school highly for its work in this area and in the words of one, 'EGA has transformed my child and no words can explain what it feels like.' A great deal of excellent work, particularly outside the classroom, has been done to ensure that vulnerable girls, those with specific, moderate, behavioural and emotional needs, and those girls with English as an additional language are cared for, protected and supported exceedingly well. Equally, the needs of those higher attaining girls are considered carefully so that they are challenged effectively. Some girls do not always arrive in school ready to learn. However, because the school has a consistent approach to behaviour management and high expectations, behaviour is exemplary. The result of this work is that the vast majority of girls make outstanding progress in their learning and that standards are rising steadily, both in national tests at the end of Year 9, and at GCSE in Year 11. Overall, standards are broadly average but considering their starting points, girls' achievement is excellent. The currently good teaching is being developed further through systematic and rigorous monitoring. Good teaching in class combines with excellent tracking and support for any girls whose progress might be in danger of slowing. This leads to their outstanding achievement. The school has already identified that the highly effective practice, supporting girls so very well outside the classroom, should be extended to work in class.

The school's specialist language status and the creative arts have done much to contribute to the outstanding personal development and well-being of the girls. Links with a variety of arts organisations are outstanding and testament to the commitment to providing the best possible experiences for learners. All girls study at least one language to GCSE, which helps to develop their confidence and self esteem. In addition to this, as part of the Islington 14-19 Partnership, the school is leading on the development of the Creative and Media Diploma. The girls benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, enrichment activities and visits to places of educational interest. These contribute well to the exceptional curriculum on offer. The school ensures that personal, social and health education keep learners safe and well informed about contemporary issues affecting the lives of many young people. Girls are able to attend on site clinics where they can seek help and guidance, about quitting smoking, for example. This demonstrates the school's proactive approach to supporting learners' personal development and well-being. Girls are able to extend their enterprise and financial skills because the school has developed an excellent network of partnership links with local businesses and institutions.

The headteacher's remarkable leadership over the last three years has ensured that the school has made further progress since its last inspection, graded as excellent, and there is outstanding capacity for further improvement. She and her deputy headteachers work very well together as a team, which results in all members of staff sharing an exciting vision for the future. There is a real and genuine desire to improve the life chances of 'their' girls. They have worked tirelessly to tackle poor attendance because, 'How can girls learn if they're not here?' The downturn has been halted and figures are now approaching national averages. An outstanding feature of the school's work is its ability to foster mutual understanding and respect for all cultures. The school is rightly proud of its achievements in this area and feels passionately that, 'The future of our city depends on schools like ours because we show young people how to respect differences and live harmoniously with others.'

## What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the progress girls make in class by building on the excellent work to support their achievements in groups outside class lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Standards overall are broadly average but all indicators point to a year-on-year rise. A substantial improvement in the provisional 2008 national tests in English, at the end of Year 9, shows that girls' results are now above the national average from previous years. In science and mathematics, there have also been rises. Results are similar to previous national averages. Improvements in mathematics have been greater than in English and science since the time of the last inspection. Girls are attaining results at GCSE that are broadly in line with national averages from previous years. This is also the case when English and mathematics are included.

The girls' achievement is outstanding because they fully meet their challenging targets and the high expectations set for them. Girls with specific, moderate, behavioural and emotional difficulties achieve extremely well because their progress is tracked rigorously, and additional support is of high quality. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with English as an additional language make excellent progress and thrive in an atmosphere of support and challenge. The school has identified that those girls from White British backgrounds are not achieving as well as other groups and have put initiatives and strategies into place to tackle this. This is already having an impact in Year 9, where girls are mentored by local business partners.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The positive relationships and rich diversity of the school population ensures that the girls' cultural and social development is excellent. Learning to work together prepares them well for working in a diverse society. One parent described her daughter, who had just started at the school, as already becoming '...more independent and outgoing and has made lots of good friends.' The girls make a positive contribution to their local community and this is exemplified, for instance, by collecting money for charity and by year 11 girls who act as interpreters for Somali parents at parents' meetings in primary schools. Girls understand the global community through internet links with schools in Chile, Africa and other countries, as well as exchange visits. Some girls visited La Reunion in the Indian Ocean to teach English to the students there, who taught them local dances in return. The girls know very well how to keep themselves safe, both through safe practice in the curriculum and knowing who to go to if there is a problem. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary and the vast majority of girls enjoy learning and are keen to learn more. The school continues to put in a range of strategies to improve attendance. Although this remains at the national average, a particular 'Fast Track' approach with a small group of students, working with families in a multi-agency context, has worked well. The attendance of girls in this group has dramatically improved, and is a model for developing further strategies.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that teaching is good. The girls' attitudes to learning are outstanding. These, together with the excellent quality of the extra help and support girls receive, and good classroom teaching, mean their progress is excellent. The learning resource centre is used exceptionally well to support learning during the school day as well as before and after school. This also helps ensure that all girls achieve as well as possible. Teachers have good subject knowledge which gives them confidence in the delivery of their lessons. Planning is thorough. Teachers set clear objectives so that pupils know where they are heading. They ensure that work is varied and engaging and that girls feel a real sense of progress in lessons. Relationships are excellent. Girls respond very well to the warmth and encouragement of their teachers, and behaviour is managed very well. The school vigorously monitors the quality of teaching, and teachers work very hard to develop their expertise further to continually improve provision. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning, and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are strongly promoted. Marking of work and feedback in the classroom, does not always show girls how well they are doing and how specifically to improve their work. In the main, teaching assistants provide helpful support in lessons but this is not consistent across all classes. Homework is set regularly and used effectively to promote progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding because issues raised at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. The school offers a broad and innovative curriculum, which is frequently reviewed to ensure that it continually meets the needs of its girls, including the most vulnerable. The emphasis is firmly on enabling girls to meet the challenges of responsible adulthood in a competitive and rapidly changing world. Girls' education is greatly enriched by the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. Participation levels are high across all age groups. The positive impact of the languages specialism is keenly felt. It contributes very well to the school's friendly, international atmosphere in which girls flourish. The range of sports, musical and cultural activities, charitable work and foreign visits is impressive. A comprehensive programme of citizenship and personal, social and health education contributes very well to girls' personal development. This programme encourages them to stay safe and pursue healthy lifestyles. The promotion of key employability skills, including ICT, to promote girls' independence and progress in all areas of the curriculum is very strong. All girls undertake work experience. A well-structured careers guidance programme, together with the strong focus on personal development, ensures that they are very well prepared to enter the next stage of education or the world of work.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Students are enthusiastic about learning, and feel safe and supported by staff at the school. Girls' progress is tracked systematically and those at risk of underachievement are identified early, and their needs addressed very well. School staff and outside agencies work closely together, engaging with families and local communities in order to support the most vulnerable girls effectively. Additional provision for students with specific, moderate and communication

difficulties and behavioural and emotional disabilities ensures these girls make excellent progress. Where teachers provide active learning opportunities, for example through team teaching and resources developed for girls whose first language is not English, all learners are included and make excellent progress. Girls commented that when they assessed each other's work it was particularly helpful in knowing what they needed to do to improve. Guidance for future education and the world of work is excellent. Alternative courses ensure that vulnerable students have access to the full curriculum. Girls who go on to college and higher education return as role models to talk to individuals and groups about their success in education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The excellent headteacher, working with a committed and talented senior leadership team, has created a thriving, purposeful school with achievement and care at its heart. The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school and has created a shared sense of purpose amongst all staff. Expectations are high and, as a result, girls flourish and achievement is outstanding. Rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring have ensured a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses with appropriate, timely, interventions to tackle underachievement. Girls are known well as individuals and are challenged to aspire and achieve their best. Governance is outstanding. Governors both challenge and support the school, are well-informed and willing to make difficult decisions. Their involvement in the new school build programme, and extensive knowledge of the local community, ensures that the school serves its diverse population well. Specialist language college status ensures all languages are equally valued with the wide range of community provision contributing to the girls' outstanding personal development and well-being.

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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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**Overall effectiveness**

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Language College, London, N1 9QG

It was a great pleasure to meet you during our recent inspection visit to your school. We found your openness and friendliness very helpful and were impressed by your politeness and confidence. You made a strong impact as you talked to us about your school and how much you appreciate it. We decided, after observing lessons, looking at your work, and talking to your teachers, that your school provides you with an outstanding quality of education. You can be proud of it!

Your behaviour in and around school is exemplary. You have excellent relationships with your teachers. You listen to them and cooperate very well with them and with each other. This helps you to make progress very effectively.

We saw some good and some outstanding lessons. The staff provide you with excellent help in sessions outside class, and this ensures that your achievement is outstanding. Your teachers work very hard to make sure that their lessons are as good as possible. They are seeking to make improvements all the time. Some lessons are better than others, though, and we have said that teachers should try and make sure that you all make as much progress as possible in your lessons.

You make a very good contribution to the community. We feel your school is preparing you well for the world of work and for your responsibilities as global citizens.

Thank you, again, for all the help you gave us during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector