

Hampstead School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100052
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	376342
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2012
Lead inspector	John Meinke

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
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	1250
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Alix Coole
Headteacher	Mr Jacques Szemalikowski
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 October 2008
School address	Westbere Road Hampstead London NW2 3RT
Telephone number	020 7794 8133
Fax number	020 7435 8260
Email address	enquiries@hampstead.org.uk

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Meinke	Additional inspector
Elizabeth Bull	Additional inspector
Tusha Chakroborti	Additional inspector
John Midgley	Additional inspector
Carmen Rodney	Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 40 teachers teach 40 lessons, of which three were joint observations with members of the school's senior leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to a number of other lessons. They held meetings with four groups of students, members of the governing body, school staff including senior and middle leaders and the former School Improvement Partner. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body and school policies. They also analysed responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 188 parents and carers and others completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

Hampstead School is a larger than average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The students come from a wide range of socio-economic, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Most students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest being of Black African heritage and any other White background. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is much higher than that found nationally. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above the national average. The school has specialist Technology College status and has gained various awards relating to its provision including the Achievement for All Quality Mark, Artsmark, Cultural Diversity Quality Standard and Healthy Schools Award. The school meets the current floor standard.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. There has been a relentless drive for improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement is good. In 2011, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE results at grade C or higher, including English and mathematics, was above the national average, representing good progress over time.
- The sixth form is good. A diverse curriculum, strategic leadership and improved guidance contribute to students making good progress.
- Teaching is good. A fifth of lessons seen during the inspection were outstanding, resulting in students making good progress. The school recognises that there is still more to do to strengthen the quality of teaching to ensure that a higher proportion of lessons are outstanding. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress.
- The school is taking decisive action to improve the reading skills of students who enter the school with low prior attainment in English. Provision for the development of numeracy is strong and attainment in mathematics is above the national average. Students are well prepared for the future.
- Behaviour is good and students agree that the school is a safe place to be. The headteacher and other leaders set high aspirations for achievement and behaviour. Students are positive about improvements in behaviour and their responses to the inspection questionnaire indicate that there are very few incidences of poor behaviour. There has been a rigorous approach to improving attendance, which is currently above average.
- Senior leaders and the governing body know the school well. Self-evaluation is accurate and there is precise use of assessment information to monitor students' progress. Leaders and managers are correctly focused on monitoring the quality of teaching as systematically and as rigorously as possible in their vision to make teaching outstanding in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding by:
 - increasing the opportunities for students to lead their own learning through planned independent and collaborative work

- consistently using assessment information to match planned tasks appropriately to the needs of learners.
- Ensure that leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching as systematically and as rigorously as possible so that:
 - a higher proportion of teaching is consistently outstanding and this is also reflected in students' outstanding learning over time
 - professional development is very closely linked to the skills teachers need to sharpen their practice and accelerate learning further.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students display positive attitudes to learning and respond well to teaching that challenges them. The senior leaders' forensic analysis of each student's progress is used by curriculum and pastoral leaders to identify and intervene quickly if anyone is falling behind.

Strategies, including a tailored curriculum offer and good partnership work with parents, have been used for students with English as an additional language, disabled students and those with special educational needs to successfully close the gap between their attainment and that of all students nationally. As a result, these groups now make significantly better than expected progress. Such strategies have now been refocused on to other groups, including a drive to further stretch and challenge the most able students, in order to further close any gaps and ensure that all students make better than expected progress.

A very large majority of parents and carers feel that their child is making good progress at the school, and inspectors endorse this view. Students know their targets well and can discuss what point they are at on the journey to meeting or exceeding them. Good progress was also evident from the standard of students' work seen. Students show great enthusiasm about their learning and relish opportunities for discussion and independent learning. They demonstrate secure knowledge when questioned about what they have learned. Students welcome the increased focus there has been in recent years on their learning and this has been supported by curriculum developments such as early entry and accelerated GCSE courses. Early entries are carefully managed to ensure that students reach their full potential.

For all groups of learners, a focus on mathematics has successfully increased progress so that attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is significantly above national averages. Shared working between English and mathematics has meant that progress in English is also rapidly improving. Achievement in the sixth form is good, with students making good progress across A-level and applied courses, although there is some variation in attainment between subjects.

Quality of teaching

The overall quality of teaching is good. A very large majority of parents and carers

agreed that their child is well taught at the school. Teachers use their expertise to plan carefully structured learning that ensures students can make at least good progress. This is supported by clear learning objectives and good explanations which develop students' understanding of what they will learn. In good and outstanding lessons, teachers have high expectations and students rise to this challenge.

A sharp focus on developing all aspects of literacy is contributing to students making good progress across the curriculum and this is resulting in students increasingly using a range of skills to interpret and respond to different forms of text and writing.

Activities are carefully matched to the needs of students and often provide opportunities to apply and further develop knowledge and skills. Some opportunities are missed to develop independent and collaborative work. Very occasionally, planned activities are not sufficiently matched to the needs of all students and their understanding was not always checked by the teacher. Typically though, teachers use targeted questions effectively to check students' understanding and reshape activities when necessary. In a few lessons, teachers talked for too long, meaning that there were not enough opportunities for students to think creatively.

There is not yet enough outstanding teaching. However, examples were seen in a French lesson, when the teacher's planning built on students' prior knowledge to develop a personalised programme of work extremely well. Students were encouraged to take risks in their learning and the subject matter allowed them to express opinions. Information and communication technology was used well to support learning. In an outstanding English lesson based on extended writing, students were again given plenty of opportunities to extend and develop their learning. Students were supportive of each other's learning and the content of the lesson allowed them to express and reflect on their ideas, thoughts and opinions. In good lessons, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to allow students to lead and reflect on their own learning to the very best effect.

The school has a robust marking policy which contributes to students having a clear understanding of how to improve. However, teachers do not always use it consistently well and marking does not always focus sharply on basic technical errors in students' work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students feel safe at the school, and the vast majority of parents and carers agree. Older students speak very positively about the improvements in behaviour that have happened since they started at the school and describe the school as 'a harmonious and welcoming community'.

Students understand the different forms of bullying and most students and parents and carers feel that the school deals with it effectively on the rare occasions it happens. Students have opportunities to take positions of responsibility, including acting as mentors, prefects and reading buddies. This enhances the positive relationships between students which contribute to them respecting each other's cultural heritage.

Students' behaviour in the majority of lessons during the inspection was good and made a positive contribution to their learning. In a few lessons where behaviour was satisfactory, this was often linked to satisfactory teaching which led to passive learning. Although a small minority of parents raised concerns about misbehaviour during lessons, the very large majority of students indicated that behaviour is good in lessons. The inspection evidence fully supported students' views that any form of unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively and decisively. A cohesive team of pastoral leaders, form tutors and mentors provide very good support for a few students who may struggle to control their own behaviour. School data and reports from staff and students show that behaviour has improved over time, with a reduction in recorded incidences of negative behaviour, including racist and homophobic bullying.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and other senior leaders share high ambitions for the school and work relentlessly to drive improvement. This drive is shared with middle leaders through an extended leadership team, which makes a strong and cohesive contribution to school improvement. Leaders at all levels work effectively to provide equal opportunities for pupils and tackle any form of discrimination should it occur.

The governing body provides support and challenge and contributes well to the school's drive for improvement. It works effectively to engage parents and carers, including a review of how assessment information can be presented in a more clearly understandable format. The school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding. The school's capacity to improve is strong.

School leaders are sharp and accurate in their judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. Decisive action has been taken to tackle weaknesses and there is an extensive programme of staff training and development. Performance management is robust and is clearly linked to raising achievement, school improvement and the needs of individual staff. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the opportunities for professional development provided for teaching staff contribute to improving the quality of teaching.

Leaders promote equality for different groups of students through carefully analysing assessment information and ensuring that any gaps between the performance of different groups are closed. Students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are well supported through collaborative work with parents. However, data and information about attendance and behaviour are not always analysed in detail to identify trends and patterns in relation to different groups of students.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and ensures that students are prepared well for the transition to the next key stage. Evaluation and review ensure that it meets the needs of students through the development of new courses and pathways, including skills-based courses in Key Stage 3 and opportunities for early and accelerated entry for GCSE, especially in mathematics. The curriculum supports the inclusive nature of the school and ensures that all students can leave the school with recognisable qualifications which enable them to progress on to higher education, employment or training. The sixth form curriculum provides a wide range of A-level

and applied courses and has benefited from recent improvements to the information, advice and guidance given to students for making choices about post-16 courses. Personal development lessons, regular cross-curricular links and projects and well-attended enrichment activities provide good opportunities for the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

3 February 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Hampstead School, London NW2 3RT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to us when we inspected your school recently. On behalf of the inspection team, I would also like to thank you for sharing your views of the school and how it has changed in recent years. We agree with you that your school is a place where you can feel safe and that there is a very clear focus on your learning. We agree that you are making good progress at the school and that Hampstead School is a good school.

You describe the school as a harmonious community where bullying is rare and teachers and other staff deal with it effectively if it happens. Some parents and carers who completed the questionnaire were concerned that a few students do not always behave well. We saw good behaviour and you said that behaviour has improved because of the high expectations of the headteacher and other staff at the school. Staff encourage you to be ambitious about your future and work hard to support you to meet these ambitions.

You told us that you enjoy your lessons and that the quality of teaching has improved. You have been set challenging targets which you are expected to work hard to meet or exceed. There is good support available if you are not meeting those targets. The outcome of this is that the results of your GCSE examinations have improved considerably.

The sixth form is an important part of the school and it provides a good range of opportunities for further study. There have been recent improvements to the guidance that you are given when making choices about post-16 study which will help you to be more informed about the next steps in your education.

Some of you said that you would like more opportunities to be leaders. We have asked the school to give you more opportunities to lead your own learning during lessons through opportunities to work independently and work with other students to develop your learning. We have also asked to school to improve teaching by ensuring that the tasks set for you during lessons are well matched to what you need to do to improve your learning and to rigorously monitor the quality the quality of teaching to make sure that this happens.

Yours sincerely

John Meinke
Lead inspector

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