

Heartlands High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135844
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	381934
Inspection dates	7–8 March 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Raeside HMI

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marianne McCarthy
Headteacher	Simon Garrill
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Raeside

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Meinke

Additional inspector

Desmond Dunne

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 22 teachers, of which three were joint observations with members of the senior team. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to a number of lessons, sometimes accompanied by a senior leader. Inspectors held meetings with groups of students, members of the governing body, and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school strategic plan, minutes of the governing body meetings, and school policies. They also analysed responses to inspection questionnaires completed by 182 parents and carers and others completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

Heartlands High School opened in new, purpose-built accommodation, in September 2010 and currently has 325 students on roll. Its projected roll by 2014 is 1080, making it a broadly average-sized school when it reaches capacity. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. The proportion who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is high, at 88%, and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is almost four times higher than average. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs and supported at the school action level of support is higher than usual, at 16%; the proportion with statements of special educational needs or at the school action plus level of support is much higher than average, at 14%. There is special provision for up to 25 students on the autistic spectrum, so far supporting four students. The school is currently oversubscribed. It has specialist status in visual performing arts and media. Given that the school does not yet have GCSE results, its performance has not been measured against the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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	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 where senior leaders have quickly established a culture of pride, high expectations and a love of learning. One parent summed up its ethos, saying that her daughter ‘goes in with enthusiasm and comes home excited’; another described how their child is ‘thriving, fulfilled and looks forward to being at this school’. Overall effectiveness is not outstanding because teaching does not yet result in rapid and sustained progress across all curriculum areas.
- Ambitious targets are set for all students; progress is monitored carefully at school, group, and individual level. Senior leaders review and adapt intervention strategies to accelerate the acquisition of basic literacy, which, for many students, is underdeveloped when they join the school. The impact of these interventions is growing as their implementation is improving, but has been uneven. Rates of progress are accelerating overall because of good teaching and high expectations.
- Teaching is predominantly good and some is outstanding. Lessons, typically, feature well-timed, collaborative activities that engage students’ interest. Learning is exceptional when teachers adapt tasks and approaches to ensure that everyone has fully grasped a concept and when students lead or model learning. It is less successful when activities are not sufficiently varied or when teachers do not adapt their approach to secure understanding. Students understand their targets well because the use of assessment is consistently good. Marking is less even in its impact, because students do not always take account of it in developing their work.
- Behaviour is good overall and often excellent. School systems are founded on routines carefully planned to foster and promote highly positive attitudes to learning. Students are proud of their new school and their good reputation locally.
- The school’s early success has been achieved through an unrelenting focus from the outset on high-quality teaching and a collective enthusiasm for learning. An ambition to become outstanding is communicated clearly by senior leaders; effective management of teaching, learning, and staff performance supports

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this goal.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently rapid and sustained rates of progress across all curriculum areas and for all groups of students by ensuring that all teachers:
 - match and adapt tasks and activities to the specific learning needs of groups and individuals
 - make astute and well-timed decisions about when to re-shape tasks and explanations so that students grasp and embed skills and concepts rapidly
 - provide opportunities for students to think about and respond to marking so that it informs learning and accelerates progress
 - plan lessons that promote students' confidence as independent learners and leaders of learning.

- Ensure interventions to support basic literacy are high impact through rigorous monitoring so that weak basic skills do not impede students' ability to make rapid progress across the curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students' attainment on entry is much lower than average and, for many, basic literacy and numeracy skills are underdeveloped. This is addressed quickly through good teaching and targeted intervention. Parents and carers, overwhelmingly, agree that their children make good progress. This confidence is well founded. Students approach their learning eagerly and are highly responsive to teaching strategies that enable them to work in pairs and groups. This is helping to develop their resilience as learners because they are able to discuss and articulate not only what, but also how they are learning. In a French lesson, students built their understanding of sentence construction through quick-fire identification of key parts of speech. They rehearsed and repeated these diligently until, by the end of the lesson, they could demonstrate excellent progress by speaking in extended, well-accented sentences.

The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is also good. Newly established provision for students on the autistic spectrum is led and managed extremely well. It provides a safe and structured environment for learning. In a typical lesson, both the teacher and the teaching assistant demonstrated high expectations of students' learning and behaviour, including the development of social routines, such as turn taking. Detailed records of students' reading and spelling competencies enabled an individualised approach so that progress was at least good for everyone. Mathematical learning, which had involved handling coins, was embedded by working out which healthy choices to purchase in the tuck shop.

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In the majority of lessons, teachers use excellent subject knowledge to devise imaginative approaches to learning which enthuse students. Questions are asked by 'cold call' rather than hands up, so that everyone is expected to think. In an English lesson, students were asked to 'bid for time', negotiating with the teacher how long a task should take. This made them consider their approach and the level of challenge more deeply and use the agreed time more productively.

Although progress is good overall and sometimes outstanding, there are a few inconsistencies, such as among White British and Black Caribbean students, whose achievement in the school's first year became a focus for improvement. Similarly, achievement in some subjects has been stronger than in others, notably faster in mathematics, for example, than in English. While the literacy focus across subjects is strong, the impact of additional interventions to tackle weak basic literacy skills has been slower to embed and also remains a focus.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good overall. Parents and carers are extremely appreciative of the high-quality teaching their children experience. Coherent structures and approaches help create a safe climate for learning with clear and consistent expectations and boundaries. Lessons are typically well-paced. Students enjoy setting electronic timers or responding to random name generators, which ensure everyone participates fairly. The most skilled teachers make selective use of such resources to accelerate and embed learning. They listen carefully and observe closely to ensure that everyone understands. No time is wasted and no one is left behind. Students in an art lesson acquired new skills quickly and securely because the teacher used highly skilled questioning to probe and develop understanding. Parts of the lesson were student-led, helping to develop maturity and independence. In music, skills and confidence were developed through inspirational teaching, so that students were able to sing to an audience of their peers. The moral and cultural aspects of learning were explored through links drawn between the development of the blues and slavery. In lessons that are part of the Year 7 'explore' curriculum, a carefully planned integrated humanities programme enables students to make intelligent comparisons between significant historical events, such as the black death, and issues facing developing countries today, such as the treatment and prevention of malaria.

Where teaching remains satisfactory, it is because these very good strategies and structures to support learning are used less well. Teachers use them to move the teaching on swiftly, but they are not complemented sufficiently by checks on understanding, or re-directed if learning is not progressing well.

In many lessons, skilled use of assessment information informs teaching and equips students with the language and skills to evaluate the quality of their own and one another's work. Learning 'passports' in English and humanities make an excellent contribution to this by allowing students to track their progress and reflect on how to improve. In some subjects, for example English, detailed and developmental marking

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provides feedback, as well as making suggestions or asking questions as to how to improve. This creates a dialogue between student and teacher that drives improvement. This high-quality marking is not fully established in all areas, however. Teachers do not always create opportunities for students to respond to written advice and, as a result, its impact is diminished.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students feel very safe at school. The diverse school community is harmonious and cohesive, described by one parent as feeling 'like a family'. Behaviour is good around the site and in lessons. Often, it is outstanding because students are highly respectful of one another and of adults and go out of their way to be supportive and welcoming. The best teaching elicits high levels of independent, proactive and self-motivated learning; satisfactory teaching militates against this because talk by the teacher is dominant and students may become passive or restless.

Students have great confidence in the school to deal effectively with bullying, although say that it is rare or non-existent. Parents and carers share this confidence. One said 'I wouldn't have had my son go to any other school...he feels safe, secure and very much wanted.' Students understand different forms of bullying well, including, for example, cyber-bullying. They express a zero tolerance of any form of racism. Systems to support academic and personal development are fully integrated. Behaviour management strategies, such as the yellow and red card system, are deliberately low-key and focused on maintaining learning. Their success is evident in how readily students remind one another of appropriate behaviour. Rewards for good behaviour, attendance, and achievement are highly valued; the house system and mixed-age tutor groups engender a healthy element of competition, illustrated by involuntary gasps and groans as the latest leader boards were displayed in assembly. Any serious infringements of the behaviour policy are taken very seriously. The management of individual students with particularly challenging behaviour is sensitive, but rigorous; exclusions are low so far, but have been necessary in a few cases. The great majority of parents and carers view the standard of behaviour as high, although a small minority point to occasional instances of disruption in lessons.

Attendance is above average overall. There are a few individual cases of persistent absence or lateness. Actions to combat these are appropriate and having a positive impact. Schemes of work and home learning units provide high-quality support via the school's website to students catching up on any missed lessons.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and governing body have successfully established a distinct identity for the school within the local community, based on three key areas: learning, ethos, and partnerships. There is a vision for excellence, led from the top. The school's early stage of development means that many leaders are carrying multiple responsibilities. They do so with dedication, skill and an impatience for the

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achievement of the highest standards. Policies and procedures to support highly effective learning are implemented consistently and evaluated rigorously. Underperformance is addressed openly, constructively and rigorously, such that capacity for sustained improvement is strong.

The governing body, along with school leaders, ensures that safeguarding arrangements are robust and supports the close monitoring of students' achievement and well-being. Governors bring a wealth of experience to the school and support innovation and ambition, such as through links with sixth form and higher education provision.

The arts specialism permeates the school and makes a tangible difference to achievement. It underpins the school's values in celebrating creativity and diversity. Students have visited universities and worked collaboratively with undergraduates on the design of school signage and murals. The school's opening ceremony, which coincided with the inspection, was punctuated with exceptional musical performances.

The 'explore' curriculum in Year 7 provides an integrated approach to humanities, with a focus on the rapid development of basic literacy skills. Time spent in mathematics and English lessons in Years 7 and 8 is weighted according to need. 'SEARCH' days enhance the curriculum with time to deepen and enrich the learning experience, dedicated for example to art, science, or issues of personal safety and well-being. Consistent implementation of the 'SUCCESS' ethos is developing students' readiness and responsibility for learning. Developing curriculum 'pathways' are based on a GCSE core, with academic or work-related options matched carefully to individual student need.

A commitment to equalities sits at the heart of the school's work and informs all planning and evaluation of performance. Common themes thread through the mixed-age tutor and house systems and underpin the school's key values, such as 'communicating clearly and well with others in different ways'. This is exemplified in a range of ways, such as by a disabled student leading a class discussion on disability awareness and by the confidently delivered formal speeches by Year 8 students at the opening ceremony. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is excellent and runs through the curriculum.

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.

9 March 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Heartlands High School, London N22 7ST

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. You told us how proud you are of your new school and how much you enjoy your learning. We agree with you that it is a good school, where you achieve well because teaching and behaviour are good. Although Heartlands has only been open for a short time, it has already established a strong identity as a specialist arts school where everyone can excel.

You wear your new uniform with pride and your behaviour around school and in lessons is generally good and often excellent. We found very little evidence of bullying and you expressed great confidence in staff, as did your parents and carers, to deal with any concerns immediately and effectively. The speeches and the performance at your official opening ceremony were an excellent example of how well your school is helping you to develop your confidence and talents, both academically and artistically.

Your senior teachers monitor your work carefully to make sure that all of you succeed, whatever your starting point when you arrive in Year 7. They set ambitious targets for all of you and review them to make sure no one falls behind. You know your targets well and make excellent use of systems like learning passports to keep track of how you are doing. You learn well in most of your lessons and exceptionally well in some. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and fun. They plan learning carefully so that everyone gets involved and develops their speaking, reading and writing skills, even in subjects other than English. This is especially helpful to those of you who lack confidence in these areas.

Teaching is mostly good and some is outstanding. It is not equally good in all lessons because the work is not always varied enough to suit everyone's needs. Sometimes, the lesson moves on too quickly without the teacher making sure everyone understands. Some marking is extremely detailed, but you do not always improve your work as a result. We have asked your senior teachers to look into both of these aspects of teaching and ensure that they improve to become as good as the best in the school. You can help this improvement by continuing to aim for the highest achievement possible and getting fully involved in all of your lessons.

Yours sincerely
Christine Raeside
Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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