

Vyners School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102442
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	387192
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Meena Kumari Wood HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy convertor
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	1120
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Henry Gardner
Headteacher	Susan Gould
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 September 2008
School address	Warren Road Ickenham Middlesex UB10 8AB
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Age group	11–18
Inspection date(s)	21–22 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Meena Kumari Wood	Her Majesty's Inspector
Desmond Dunne	Additional inspector
Lesley Leak	Additional inspector
David Nebesnuick	Additional inspector
Hugh Betterton	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 41 teachers teaching 47 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with members of the senior and middle leadership teams. In addition, inspectors visited a support session in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base, carried out learning walks that focused on the learning and progress of students. Meetings were held with five groups of students, school staff, including senior and middle leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. 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 number of documents, including departmental development plans and the school self-evaluation, case studies of students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, the safeguarding and equality policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. In addition, they analysed 383 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average secondary school and has an average-sized sixth form. It is a popular, over-subscribed school. The school specialises in mathematics and computing. The proportion of students entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is lower than the national average for secondary schools. A very small proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is in line with the average, but the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is well below the average. The majority of the students are White British with a third of students from minority ethnic backgrounds; the largest group are from an Indian background. A small number of students are at early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The school has a small specialist resource provision for hearing impaired students.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school with a good sixth form. The majority of parents, carers and students are positive about the quality of education and care provided. Over three years, GCSE results demonstrate above average attainment. The school is not judged as good because, students start from a high base and make satisfactory progress towards their GCSE outcomes. Examination results in the sixth form are above the national average.
- Teaching is satisfactory with much that is good. Where lessons match students' needs and abilities through well-structured tasks and teachers check learning, students make good progress. Some lessons lack sufficient challenge; assessment activities and marking are not always employed effectively to plan learning in line with students' targets and do not inform students of where they can improve. Teaching in the sixth form is mainly good and results in good achievement.
- Effective support for disabled students, those with special educational needs and those with hearing impairments, results in the majority making good progress. Attendance is high. The school's curriculum effectively supports the aspirations of students and has particular strengths in English Baccalaureate.
- Students feel safe. Their behaviour is good and they are enthusiastic, well motivated learners. Virtually all students progress to post-16 education, employment or training.
- The headteacher, supported by strong governance, has successfully created a harmonious community with a stable middle leadership. More effective monitoring of students' standards using good quality information has resulted in tackling some underachievement; however, the monitoring of students' progress and the standards of their work in lessons is at early stages.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of all students across the school, in all subjects and key stages by:
 - matching teacher expectations, lesson activities and tasks to students' attainment levels and target grades
 - more rigorous monitoring of students' progress in lessons and their work over time by senior and middle leaders.
- Develop greater consistency in assessment across subjects by ensuring that:
 - all teachers build on identified good practice
 - information on students' abilities, knowledge and skills is used to plan more challenging lesson activities and tasks which extend their learning
 - the regular marking of students' class and homework consistently tells students how to improve and develops their literacy and numeracy skills.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most of the parents and carers believe that achievement is good for students. Inspectors judge that whilst the achievement of some students is good, the majority make satisfactory progress given their high starting points. In the last year, the proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, remained at previous 2010 levels. This was because of lower outcomes than predicted in mathematics. The school has taken steps to ensure that appropriate interventions for Year 11 students will result in improved outcomes this year. Sixth form students make satisfactory progress in their chosen AS level subjects and good progress in A level subjects.

The vast majority of students are keen to learn when given well-structured opportunities in lessons. Where lessons have clear objectives and tasks in line with their abilities, students respond effectively to skilful, probing questioning by teachers and make good progress. However, where lessons are insufficiently focused on extending learning, students make satisfactory progress. For instance, in a French lesson, activities did not take into account the diverse abilities of students; this resulted in some finding the listening task on expressions of likes and dislikes too easy, with a few struggling to complete the task. Inspectors' observations confirm the lack of challenge in some lessons and the inconsistent use of assessment in planning appropriate activities that meet the needs, in particular, of more able students. This was a view shared by a number of parents and carers and acknowledged by the school in its self-evaluation.

Assessment information is used effectively to provide out of lesson support for

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students in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base and for targeting those students at risk of underachieving in English, mathematics and science. A more structured focus on the literacy skills of younger students is proving to be successful in helping some develop effective reading skills. However, the focus on literacy and numeracy skills, and pride in neat presentation of students' work, are not in evidence in all lessons.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving, with much that is good. The responses from parents, carers and students to the inspection questionnaires reflected the majority view that teaching is good. Where teachers plan lessons in line with students' needs and abilities, tasks are well structured and teachers check what students are learning. This ensures that all students are fully engaged and acquiring appropriate levels of knowledge and skills. For instance in one Year 11 geography lesson, students deepened their knowledge of megacities through peer and group discussion. They demonstrated reasoned understanding when questioned by the teacher.

In those lessons where teaching is only satisfactory, and in a few cases inadequate, this is because teachers' expectations and planning are not effectively matched to students' prior knowledge, skills and needs, and they do not check students' learning often enough. For instance, in one Year 11 lesson with a diverse mix of students of differing abilities and prior knowledge, the activity was insufficiently challenging for those working at the higher level and did not encourage all students to develop their higher-order critical thinking skills. Assessment activities, such as peer- and self-assessment, are used inconsistently across subjects. Where these strategies are employed well, students reflect and understand what they have learnt and, importantly, what they need to do next. The marking of students' work does not consistently provide information about where students have been successful and what they need to do to improve. Even where teachers do provide good quality information, there is insufficient rigour in the follow up and teachers do not ensure that students use the helpful information to improve. The quality of the targets and feedback similarly varies, so that in some lessons, students are not clear about precisely what they need to do to attain their targets or in some cases, are not clear what their target is. Inspectors agree with parents, carers and students that there is an inconsistent approach in the quality of teachers' feedback.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students report that they feel safe in school and that adults are approachable if they have concerns. Parents and carers support this view. The majority of students behave courteously towards one another and towards adults. Most parents, carers and students agree that behaviour in lessons is generally good but a significant minority believe that learning in some lessons is disrupted by poorly behaving students. Inspectors judged that in the majority of cases, students behaved well in lessons and around the school. However, they observed in a small minority of lessons where activities were insufficiently absorbing or where students did not

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understand their work; a few misbehaved and distracted others. This was especially the case during the morning tutorial sessions.

The school's effective sanctions and rewards policies, together with rigorous monitoring, have resulted in reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour and lowering exclusions to below the national average. The school helps those students whose attendance is affected by their social and personal circumstances, to attend school more regularly. Notably, older students greatly value mentoring roles with younger students. They enthusiastically take on leadership roles, for instance, for charity work, musical concerts or decoration of communal areas with students' art work. Students express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with bullying, especially cyber-bullying.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has provided good leadership on the twin priorities of raising standards and improving behaviour and attendance. Self-evaluation processes are self-critical and thorough and confirm this is a school that, in most respects, knows its strengths and where it needs to improve, although there is some inconsistency in self-awareness across the subject areas. Although senior managers have worked hard with middle managers to improve the quality of teaching and assessment through coaching and professional staff development, the school's view of the quality of teaching is not yet accurate. This is because there is too little focus on the progress students make during lessons, the quality of assessment and whether there is a match between learning activities, students' abilities and their target grades. Middle leaders are beginning to use good quality information on the standards reached by students during the year. Although this valuable information guides their termly progress checks, it is not used by teachers to guide their lesson planning and is not reliably informing target setting across all subjects.

Effective internal support and good partnership work with external agencies are combining well to mould the positive ethos of the school. Efforts to involve more parents and carers in their children's learning have been more successful with some groups than with others; the school is aware of this and is revisiting its strategy.

The impact of the curriculum on students' outcomes is good. The school's E-Bac provision is effectively meeting students' aspirations and needs. The school's computing specialism is effective as inspectors observed students confidently using their information technology skills in business studies, geography, science and mathematics. All students benefit from studying double science, and many study triple science, and then successfully progress to the sixth form. Students broaden their horizons through a range of extra-curricular activities that they greatly value and which develop their social and cultural skills. Restorative justice and conflict resolution help students understand the impact of their anti-social behaviours on others and the difference between right and wrong. Students benefit from effective themed learning days. However, teachers frequently miss opportunities in lessons and tutorials to support students' broader moral, ethical and spiritual development

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and this aspect is satisfactory. In Year 9, students receive good advice and guidance on their Key Stage 4 options. Sixth form students reported that the quality of course guidance in Year 11 and 12 was good, although the school induction processes do not prepare some well enough for the demands of AS level courses. There is insufficient emphasis on developing critical thinking skills and higher order writing skills.

The governing body fulfil their statutory obligations for safeguarding. They very effectively support and challenge the leadership team in raising students' standards. The school's equalities plans monitor attainment of different student groups and vigorously challenge any form of discrimination, but there is less evaluation of the success of actions undertaken. School leaders have shown their ability to bring about sustained improvement in raising standards, in particular, in the sixth form and this has been acknowledged by most parents, carers and students. All this indicates a good capacity for further improvements.

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.



23 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Vyners School, Hillingdon, UB10 8AB

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and were impressed by how polite you were, your good attitudes towards your learning and your excellent attendance. Well done!

Vyners School is a satisfactory school with a good sixth form. Most of you enjoy your lessons, are keen to learn, make satisfactory progress and attain good results. In many lessons we observed well-planned tasks and activities, but in others, planning was not clear enough to help you to make the progress of which you are capable and teachers were not always checking your learning. However, the school is providing those of you who need it, especially in Year 11, with good subject support outside lessons. Stimulating extra-curricular opportunities and strong encouragement from all staff to behave well and focus on your learning help you to develop as responsible citizens and you receive good guidance on your next steps. Those of you in the sixth form make good progress and achieve good results. You greatly value the opportunities you have to organise school charity events, and virtually all of you go on to training, university or jobs when you leave.

We have asked the school's senior leaders to:

- improve your GCSE and A-level results, by giving you more detailed feedback on your work and ensuring that teachers plan suitably challenging and appropriate activities for you
- monitor your progress in lessons and the marking of your work more closely to ensure that no-one underachieves in examinations and assessments

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

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