

Holland Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100501
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	363639
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1343
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sir John Baker CBE
Headteacher	Mr Colin Hall
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
School address	Airlie Gardens Campden Hill Road London W8 7AF
Telephone number	020 7908 1000
Fax number	020 7908 1084
Email address	info@hollandpark.rbkc.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 38 lessons taught by 37 teachers, four of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked closely at its analysis of student progress and attainment. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, staff and local authority officers. Inspectors also scrutinised the school development plan, policies, reports from the School Improvement Partner and records of school improvement work. They considered responses to questionnaires by 142 parents and carers, 128 students and 86 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness and sustainability of strategies to raise attainment and improve rates of progress for all students in mathematics and English.
- The impact of steps taken since the last inspection to raise attainment and achievement and improve the curriculum in the sixth form.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in driving improvement in teaching, learning and students' outcomes.

Information about the school

Holland Park is a larger than average, over-subscribed comprehensive school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Students are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds: about 21% are White British, 15% are from Black British, African and Caribbean backgrounds and about 11% from Asian backgrounds. Around 60% speak English as an additional language, with very few at an early stage of fluency. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and mainly includes students identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties or moderate learning needs. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average. The school holds a number of awards, including Investors in People, the Inclusion Quality Mark and Healthy Schools status. The school has had specialist status in humanities since September 2007. Admission for up to 10% of students is for aptitude in art.

The school is currently undergoing a complete rebuild on the existing site, with much of the school housed in temporary accommodation until its completion, anticipated for September 2012.

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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Holland Park school provides an inspirational climate for learning within a safe environment. Exceptional leadership and a dedicated staff have secured key improvements since the last inspection, such that it is now an outstanding school. Every care has been taken to ensure that, from the moment of entering the secure site, students are safe and inspired to learn and achieve. One student said that the school had exceeded all his expectations and that he had, 'not once felt threatened as I've walked through the school gates or sat on the playground bench'.

GCSE and A level results have improved year on year and are now well above national averages. The curriculum is under constant review so that it can be adapted and enhanced to support and benefit any group or individual at risk of underachieving. It is underpinned by the humanities specialism and in art, which pervade all aspects of school life and enrich the environment. Students are greatly appreciative of the wide range of additional learning experiences that help secure their excellent achievement. Attendance is high and large numbers of students willingly lengthen their school day or attend on Saturdays to take advantage of supplementary study opportunities.

Equality of opportunity sits at the heart of all the school does. Different groups of students make equally good progress because they are known as individuals and their learning is carefully tracked. Senior leaders analyse and interpret assessment information carefully to make sure no one is left behind and take swift action to remedy any shortfall. For example, they rightly identified that, although attainment in mathematics GCSE remains high, progress in recent years has been variable. An ongoing focus on mathematics has been successful in securing progress for the 2011 GCSE cohort which already exceeds that of the previous year.

The great majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good and much was outstanding. Students are eager to learn and are developing greater confidence and ambition as standards of achievement rise. A small minority of teaching observed was, however, only satisfactory, often because opportunities for students to become actively engaged in their own learning and to articulate their ideas were limited. These lessons tend to be dominated by teacher talk or are not sufficiently adapted to take account of misconceptions or to accelerate the pace of learning.

The exceptional care, guidance and support have enabled students to make the best of the wealth of opportunities offered by the school. The specialism, along with students' extremely well-developed personal skills, social and cultural understanding, complement the ambitious drive for achievement. Students are reflective about their learning, ambitious to do well and have justifiable confidence that they will meet the school's high aspirations for them.

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The senior leader now in charge of the outstanding sixth form has responded to the recommendations of the last inspection swiftly and effectively. Purposeful, targeted intervention ensures that every student can reach their full potential. Close liaison with parents and with external partners tailors information and guidance to the individual so that the curriculum offer is appropriate and challenging.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has ensured that those aspects of the school which were found to be outstanding at its last inspection have been securely maintained and built upon. One member of staff summed this up, saying, 'The head's warmth and passion for all is daily evident. His transparent ambition for students is palpable. His desire for us to succeed is underpinned by role modelling everything.' Together with his associate head, the headteacher has set this stamp on all levels of leadership in the school. Self-evaluation is rigorous, clear-sighted and sharply focused. Students and their parents and carers express well-founded confidence in the school's leaders. The capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is consistently good, that an increased proportion is outstanding and all pupils are enabled to make exceptional progress, by:
 - providing increased opportunities for students to be actively engaged in their own learning
 - creating opportunities for students to articulate what they know and have learned through increased collaboration and discussion
 - ensuring that students receive highly effective and personalised feedback on how to improve, both verbally and in writing, in all lessons.
- Sustain high attainment and continue to improve progress for all students in mathematics by ensuring that the quality of teaching and assessment is consistently good or outstanding.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Students at Holland Park are keenly aware that their school is ambitious for them. As one boy put it, 'the drive to do well is pushed upon us. That has stuck with me and I'm determined to succeed now.' This determination was evident in the large majority of lessons seen during the inspection, where students applied themselves eagerly to their learning. Students' good and often outstanding progress is supported by excellent relationships with teachers and other adults and a collective drive for high achievement. They have absorbed the rich learning culture, strongly in evidence in the immaculate environment, where they are surrounded by inspiring images, quotations and celebrations of achievement.

Students arrive at Holland Park with average prior attainment. Their attainment when they leave is significantly higher than average, because high expectations and good or outstanding teaching elicits much good and some exceptional progress. Expectations are high for everyone, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, whose progress is also good or, as in 2010, outstanding.

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Behaviour around the site and in lessons is good. Students are friendly and welcoming and express pride in their school. When teaching is planned to challenge independent thought and provides opportunities for self-expression, behaviour is outstanding. A very small amount of off-task behaviour was seen by inspectors, linked to teaching which was less successful in ensuring that all were engaged and making good progress. Students know and understand the 'consequences' system and enjoy gaining 'vivo miles' as rewards and this contributes to their good conduct. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is excellent, exemplified by one boy who spoke feelingly to his tutor group about the importance of making healthy choices. They have a clear grasp of wider issues affecting their lives, such as internet safety. Uptake of additional sporting activities is high across all groups.

Students feel that they have a strong voice. They have been instrumental in changing the shape of the school day and have a keen understanding of how this impacts on their learning. They engage enthusiastically in the wide range of leadership opportunities available to them. They willingly accept roles as house leaders, or as editors of 'What's Going on @Holland Park', the highly professional newsletter which they produce and distribute to over 1000 local homes. They regularly raise money for their adopted charity, The Royal Marsden hospital, as well as being responsive to immediate need, for example, raising money for Japanese earthquake victims through a staging of King Lear, acted by staff. Students spoke warmly of how much fun it was to see some staff, 'out of their comfort zones'. Students in this ethnically diverse school have an acute understanding of cultural difference and willingly consider and reflect on others' experiences. They work together harmoniously and embrace opportunities to develop team skills. They have high aspirations and demonstrate a commitment to ongoing success in each phase of their education, for example through their high attainment and attendance, or through carefully-presented work.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, activities are exceptionally well planned to challenge and enthuse every student. Detailed knowledge about individual stages of learning is used to ensure that tasks, groupings and questioning drive learning at a brisk pace. Opportunities for independent thought and group discussion are central to the lesson; students are expected to articulate what they know in increasingly sophisticated and academically appropriate language. Assessment mostly shows detailed knowledge of the student and is skilfully tailored to their needs, helping to identify misconceptions and re-direct learning. Marking in books is detailed, provides specific guidance on how to improve and results in work of a better quality. In good lessons, many of these features were evident but not always with a consistently high impact on learning. In satisfactory lessons, assessment, including marking, was less well targeted to individual needs and opportunities to capture and develop new concepts were sometimes missed.

The curriculum is carefully adapted to secure excellent outcomes for all students, including the most vulnerable. Following the creation of a Year 10 boys' English group, progress has accelerated as a result of early examination entry and targeted teaching. Fast-track courses, including Latin, provide challenge for more able students. Extensive use is made of external partners to refine and develop the curriculum offer, such as the link with a school where mathematics is outstanding, with a prestigious university and with The

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Prince's Teaching Institute. The extensive extra-curricular offer is carefully planned to enrich learning and additional funding ensures fair access for all.

Students are extremely well supported as they move through different stages of their education. One parent commented on the daunting prospect of making the move into a large secondary school, but said, 'we cannot fault the school on their care and attention and fantastic communications forum'. The sixth form curriculum has necessarily been narrowed as part of a local partnership agreement, but students are carefully guided towards appropriate pathways. Consequently, the numbers not in education, training or employment are very small.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leadership at Holland Park is highly cohesive and focused on excellence. There is an unrelenting drive for outstanding learning and achievement. The self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is rigorous and accurate. Improvement planning arising from this is precise and well-focused, at both whole school and department level. The effectiveness of action taken to improve the quality of teaching is evident in the predominantly good and outstanding teaching seen during the inspection. Staff training is keenly focused to support and develop inexperienced teachers and to nurture talent. There is a concerted and often innovative approach to staff development, including the headteacher and other senior leaders modelling outstanding lessons. Every teacher has their work filmed as a training aid. Excellent teachers have re-trained in unfamiliar subject areas to preserve continuity for students and to sustain capacity in a changing workforce.

The governing body bring a wealth of expertise to the school. They discharge all statutory duties effectively and use their highly productive and open partnership with senior leaders to provide vigorous challenge and support. The governing body and senior leaders have taken exceptional care to ensure the safeguarding of all members of the school community. A supervised secure entrance, using thumb-print technology, accounts for the presence or absence of all students including those in the sixth form. The extensive on-site re-build has been expertly managed by the associate headteacher, such that it presents no interruption to the safe and smooth running of the current school. External agencies commend the 'excellent partnership' and 'robust and effective' relationships that have been developed to ensure student well-being and safety. Channels for communication with parents and carers are clear and accessible to all. Consultation is regular and well-organised to ensure that parents' and carers' views are known, for

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example, through the use of parental questionnaires, although procedures to involve them directly in decision-making are not fully established.

The school has actively sought partnerships which have a direct impact on student achievement, for example, dance students working in collaboration with the English National Ballet. The 'Positive Engagement Programme' is one of a number of external agencies with which the school works effectively to secure the progress of vulnerable students. School leaders and the governing body have achieved outstanding value for money in managing resources and developing partnerships with the single focus of improving outcomes for young people.

Students at Holland Park are proud of their community. They have a sophisticated, first-hand understanding of diversity and equality. Discrimination is not tolerated and all members of the school community understand that the school gate marks a boundary between the potential challenges of wider society and the safe, respectful, cohesive community of the school. Students experience wider national and global contexts through a range of provision, including curriculum visits this year to Iceland, Berlin and Pompeii, although the impact of this has not been fully evaluated.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Attainment in the sixth form is now significantly above national averages and well-founded predictions for 2011 indicate that this will be sustained. Progress by the end of A level courses in 2010 was well above expectations. Past variability in subject performance at AS level has been robustly and successfully tackled, with pass rates, including at higher grades, now also above national averages. Teaching is closely monitored. Teachers are trained and supported to ensure that they have the necessary expertise and skills to deliver exceptional sixth form teaching. Lessons seen during the inspection, although

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reduced in number because of public examinations, demonstrated some outstanding learning experiences leading to exceptional progress. Students speak highly of their sixth form. They feel safe, their attendance is high and they make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, such as refurbishing a local care home in partnership with the mayor. They act as mentors to younger students, visit primary schools and deliver sixth form briefings and bulletins.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

A lower-than-average proportion of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority are happy with their child's experience at school and agree that teaching is good. Several commented on the drive and dedication of the staff. Although most agreed that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns, a few commented that they would appreciate better communication, for example, about how classes are organised by ability. Two raised serious concerns which were investigated and discussed at length with the school in the course of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holland Park School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 142 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1343 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	95	67	41	29	6	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	92	65	44	31	4	3	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	85	60	51	36	4	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	84	59	49	35	7	5	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	77	54	62	44	2	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	77	54	57	40	6	4	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	46	62	44	8	6	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	70	49	61	43	6	4	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	49	60	42	6	4	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	78	55	53	37	3	2	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	39	67	47	9	6	7	5
The school is led and managed effectively	98	69	38	27	3	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	99	70	38	27	2	1	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



27 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Holland Park School, London, W8 7AF

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. You are extremely proud of Holland Park and we agree with you that it is an outstanding school. You achieve excellent examination results, both at GCSE and A level and you take advantage of the many ways in which your school helps you to do this. We were very impressed that you even attend extra lessons on a Saturday!

Every effort has been taken to make sure that once you enter the school gate, you are very safe, including the high-tech thumb print entry system. You look after your school community extremely well and the buildings provide a highly stimulating learning environment, reflecting excellence in your work and in the wider world of art and literature. Your sixth form art exhibition was stunning and would have graced any London gallery.

In most of the lessons we observed you made good progress and in some it was outstanding, because you were involved in directing your own learning and expressing your ideas. In some lessons, we thought teachers needed to challenge your thinking more and increase opportunities for you to express your views and to learn in more active ways. Some of you have made exceptional improvements in your learning because teachers' assessment and marking has guided you so well. However, this is also an area that could be more consistent, including in mathematics. Your senior teachers are already working hard on these aspects and we agree with them that it is an important priority.

We think that Holland Park has the capacity to go from strength to strength. You spoke to us of the determination to succeed that your school has instilled in you. We know that you will continue to support your school leaders in driving the school forward by aiming high and by maintaining excellent standards of learning and achievement.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside

Her Majesty's Inspector

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