Lady Margaret School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100364
Local Authority	Hammersmith And Fulham
Inspection number	376386
Inspection dates	20—21 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Gale HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11—19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	710
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Krysia Williams
Headteacher	Sally Whyte
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2007
School address	Parsons Green London SW6 4UN
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 28 lessons, taught by 26 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and staff. A telephone interview was held with the school's former improvement partner. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, curriculum plans, the school's tracking data showing students' progress, teachers' lesson plans, students' work and the displays around the school. Inspectors scrutinised policies including those related to child protection, minutes of governing body meetings, and 273 questionnaires completed by parents and carers. They also looked at questionnaires completed by staff and students.

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

- Whether teaching and other provision secure outstanding progress for all groups of learners.
- The quality of teaching across the curriculum and in different key stages.
- The quality of personal development outcomes for students.
- Whether outcomes in the sixth form, including progress for all groups, are outstanding.
- The success of leaders and managers in driving up the quality of teaching over time.

Information about the school

Lady Margaret School, a specialist school for mathematics, computing and music, is smaller than most secondary schools. The school reserves 50 places out of 90 for girls who regularly attend Church of England services. The majority of students are White British. The proportions of minority ethnic students and of students who do not have English as their first language are slightly above average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than that usually found but increasing. Approximately one tenth of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- Lady Margaret School provides its students with an outstanding standard of education. One parent, reflecting the views of many others, accurately stated, 'The school does an excellent job both academically and pastorally and I, as well as many other parents, greatly appreciate the education our daughters receive.'
- Good teaching combines with an excellent curriculum and outstanding care, guidance and support to ensure that all groups of students in the main school make rapid progress from above average starting points to attain at a very high level.
- The sixth form is good. Students enter with high levels of attainment. They make good progress to attain A-level results well above those found nationally. However, progress across the curriculum is uneven ranging by subject from satisfactory to outstanding.
- The school works exceptionally well in partnership to support its students, particularly those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.
- Excellent opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community are enthusiastically accepted by students who gain excellent leadership skills as they move through the school.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and students, including those in circumstances that make them more vulnerable, feel very safe.
- Students behave very well around the school and, when given the opportunity to fully participate in lessons, demonstrate a real passion for their learning.
- Overall, teaching is good. Where it is less successful this is usually due to the assessment information not being used well enough by teachers to plan challenging independent learning opportunities for the full range of learners.
- Most students know their challenging targets, and excellent personal guidance means they have a strong understanding of how best to achieve them. For example, groups of Year 11 students could name any subject they were below their challenging target in and express clearly what they needed to do to improve.
- Initiatives, including professional development opportunities, to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been effective since the previous inspection. However, the school recognizes there is scope to more sharply

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target them at teachers' individual needs to make teaching consistently outstanding.

- Leaders in the school have a real passion for making Lady Margaret the best school it can be. Significant improvements have been made to all areas identified at the time of the previous inspection. Systems for tracking and intervening with underachieving students have been significantly enhanced. Excellent staff morale coupled to accurate self-evaluation and excellent development planning mean the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the leadership and management of teaching at all levels to:
  - tailor professional development opportunities tightly to the identified needs of teachers
  - ensure that teachers consistently plan and develop independent learning opportunities for the full range of learners in their lessons
  - eradicate remaining subject variation in the sixth form.

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

Students' achievement is outstanding. All groups of students make excellent progress from well above average starting points to achieve standards that are very high by the end of Year 11. Any potential underachievement is identified quickly and effectively tackled by careful tracking and intervention. This helped 92% of students achieve at least five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, in 2011. Students' relationships with teaching staff are excellent and allow them to respond very positively to any challenges set. Effective specialist support ensures that all groups of students with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress. Those students who do not have English as their first language also receive excellent support and make progress in line with their peers.

Students' respectful behaviour is a consistent feature at Lady Margaret. Students particularly enjoy lessons where they are actively involved in high-paced lessons involving paired or group work that extends their thinking. For example, Year 8 students responded very purposefully to a geography lesson on coastal erosion where they were working in groups to discuss and act out the process. Clever teacher questioning of subsequent presentations by different groups ensured that learning was brisk. Occasionally teachers over direct their lessons and/or tasks are less well-targeted at the range of abilities in the class. This causes the pace of learning to drop with students becoming passive learners.

Extra-curricular learning opportunities are extensive and high take-up means they make a significant contribution to learning. For example, public speaking skills

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combine well with high attainment to prepare students very well for the next steps in their education. Groups of students, including those in circumstances that make them more vulnerable, are clear that bullying is 'very rare' and is not tolerated at the school. Students are very confident that it will be dealt with robustly and effectively by staff if it does occur. Students' excellent spiritual development, noted at the time of the previous inspection, remains very strong. Overall, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

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	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	**1**
Pupils' behaviour	**1**
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	**2**
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**

How effective is the provision?

A parent, reflecting on her daughter's experiences at Lady Margaret, summed up the teachers very well when she said, 'Teachers are very enthusiastic, and have a passion for their subject which they transmit to their students.' Teachers have high expectations of learners and, partially due to the small size of the school, an awareness of the ability range of individuals in the class, which they use to plan appropriate challenging tasks. In outstanding lessons, teachers carefully plan for the range of abilities in their class so that students' learning is accelerated by building securely on prior learning. In these lessons students learn at a rapid pace working independently and in groups. However, a few lessons are only satisfactory because the same task is often set for the whole group and assessment information is not used well enough to plan suitably demanding work for everyone. These lessons suffer from being over teacher directed and progress slows for some groups of learners as a result.

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

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The curriculum meets students' needs exceptionally well. It offers a wide choice of academic subjects. Adaptations to curriculum pathways based on identified need are regularly made. For example, in some subject areas, the Key Stage 3 curriculum has been reduced to two years to allow for greater flexibility. The school's music specialism plays a full part in extensive enrichment opportunities. These are much enjoyed by students and have a significant positive impact on students' learning due to the high take-up. For example, over half the school is involved in the annual concert and a musical production is put on annually. Small group literacy and numeracy lessons are part of the curriculum in Key Stage 3 and ensure that all students have well-developed core skills to access the rest of their education.

A group of students in circumstances that make them more vulnerable spoke highly of the very good relationships they enjoy with their teachers and the exceptionally caring ethos within the school. A multi-agency approach to supporting vulnerable students is very effective due to careful planning. Excellent intervention work ensures that these students make the same outstanding progress as their peers. All students say that staff ensure there are opportunities for them to catch up if they fall behind or miss work. Transitions are equally carefully planned for in the school. Excellent relationships exist with primary schools and visits by key Lady Margaret staff mean that each new intake make rapid progress from the start of their school careers. Transition into the sixth form is equally well handled. Students feel they have the right information and time for reflection when choosing options.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	**2** 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?

The headteacher, ably supported by her determined leadership team, has established a clear shared vision. This has been used very effectively to build on the considerable strengths of Lady Margaret School and ensure an outstanding education for students. Leaders and staff at all levels are very clear about the priorities for improvement and there is enormous shared drive to improve all aspects of the school.

Self-evaluation is very robust and exceedingly challenging targets are set at an institutional, departmental and individual student level. Rigorous tracking of students' progress and systematic and innovative intervention, including sixth form mentoring, result in almost all students being on track to meet or exceed their challenging targets.

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Systems to improve the quality of teaching, including rigorous monitoring and subsequent professional development, have been successful; the school can demonstrate significant improvements in teachers' practice. School leaders recognise there is scope to further sharpen these systems to eradicate subject variation in the sixth form and ensure that all teaching consistently matches the best; consistently providing the independent learning they desire.

Governors are fully involved in the life of the school, providing outstanding challenge and support. Procedures for ensuring the health and safety, safeguarding and the well-being of school members and visitors are robust. Very effective partnership working is enhanced by the school's specialist subjects. For example, the school runs mathematics master classes in primary schools. A careful analysis of its context in the local and wider community has developed the school's contribution to community cohesion well. Equality of opportunity is a core value at the school, as demonstrated by the high quality of care and support shown to students from a variety of backgrounds and/or needs. The school is very aware of any small differences in the achievement of groups and rapidly closes the gaps between them. As a result all groups of students achieve very well. The school works closely with parents and carers and has the support of the overwhelming majority.

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	2
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	**1**
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	**2**
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

Students enter the sixth form with high prior attainment and make good progress overall to achieve very high standards in A-level examinations. Although high standards have been maintained over several years, there is variation in achievement between different subjects with progress across the curriculum varying from satisfactory to outstanding.

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Most students from the main school choose to enter the sixth form. This is due to the very good relationships they enjoy with staff in the main school, the excellent range of subjects on offer and the good quality teaching to meet their needs well. An increasing number of students are joining from other schools and the sixth form is expanding in its new building. Retention in the sixth form is excellent with almost all students who start completing their studies. Sixth formers are excellent role models for younger students and are keen to take on the many responsibilities offered to them. For example, the mentoring of younger students makes a significant contribution to learning in the main school. The quality of guidance and support students receive is excellent. This contributes very well to the proportion of Lady Margaret School students gaining places at high ranking universities; this being among the best for state schools.

Leaders and managers of the sixth form have effectively expanded the sixth form while maintaining very high standards. Self-evaluation is robust and action is being taken with subjects that are underperforming compared with the best.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	**2**
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers are very supportive of the school and the education it provides. One parent reflected the views of several others by stating, 'In general the school encourages a healthy lifestyle but PE facilities are not adequate.' Inspectors found that the school does what it can with its restricted site and within the constraints of budget.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lady Margaret 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 273 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 710 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	165	60	99	36	7	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	177	65	92	34	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	99	36	135	49	11	4	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	124	45	111	41	5	2	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	153	56	97	36	4	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	87	32	141	52	16	6	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	26	158	58	19	7	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)	116	42	116	42	4	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	116	42	122	45	10	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	111	41	117	43	10	4	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	76	28	138	51	16	6	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	141	52	113	41	5	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	171	63	86	32	6	2	1	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	**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:	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. ■ 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.

23 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Lady Margaret School, Parsons Green, London SW6 4UN

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to inspectors when we recently visited your school. Here are our main inspection findings.

- Your school is outstanding. Overall, all groups of students in the main school, including those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress in your learning to attain very good grades at GCSE.
- The sixth form is good. Sixth formers gain very good grades at A level but your progress, while good overall, varies in different subjects.
- The school's Christian ethos and your excellent behaviour contribute to your outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school looks after you exceptionally well. As a result, you feel extremely safe and are able to contribute very well to the school and local community.
- The curriculum is excellent throughout the school and constantly under review. This ensures that you can choose courses which meet your needs very well.
- The school is excellent at monitoring your progress carefully to ensure that extra help is provided should you fall behind your challenging targets.
- Your attendance is high. This coupled to excellent opportunities to develop work-related and other skills, means that you are very well prepared for your next steps in education or employment.

To accelerate your progress even further, we have asked leaders and managers to improve on the good quality teaching you receive, in the main school and sixth form, by making sure that all lessons are closely matched to your different abilities and give you more opportunities to develop as independent learners.

You can help by always focusing strongly on your learning in class and responding to independent tasks set.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale

Her Majesty's Inspector

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