

Brentford School for Girls

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102536
Local Authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	376735
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	974
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Benn
Headteacher	Marais Leenders
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 November 2008
School address	5 Boston Manor Road Brentford TW8 0PG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 42 lessons and parts of lessons and observed 40 teachers. Meetings took place with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a number of staff, parents and carers and groups of students. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at documentation which included self-evaluation documents, assessment information, safeguarding documentation, curriculum planning and samples of students' work. Inspectors analysed the results of 100 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and took account of the views expressed in student questionnaires.

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

- Strategies to improve GCSE results in science, history and geography.
- The progress of more-able students in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The impact of new approaches to raise the quality of teaching and learning.
- The impact of leadership on attainment and progress.

Information about the school

Brentford School for Girls is an average-sized, single-sex comprehensive school, although numbers in Year 7 and in the sixth form are rising. Students come from diverse social, linguistic, faith and ethnic backgrounds. A large proportion of girls, two fifths, travel from inner London boroughs. Students come from a wide range of feeder schools, an average of 70 in any one year. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Almost three quarters are from minority ethnic backgrounds; the largest proportions are from Pakistani, Indian, Somali and Afghan heritages. There is an above-average proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. A high proportion of these have little or no fluency in English when they start school. An above-average number start or leave school at other than the expected times. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, while the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is average. The majority of these students have specific or moderate learning difficulties. The acting headteacher has been in post for 16 months. The school is a media specialist school and has won the Gold Award for International School status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

- Brentford School for Girls is a good school. Achievement is good overall. Over recent years GCSE results have risen steadily so that currently attainment is in line with national averages. However, gifted and talented students are not sufficiently challenged in some lessons – particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9. Strategies for improving teaching and learning and results in history, geography and science are being effective. Students with English as an additional language achieve well.
- Students feel outstandingly safe in and around the school. They reported that they were aware of whom they should talk to if they were in difficulty for any reason, for example bullying, and praised the good work of individual heads of house. Attendance is above average and is currently rising. The outstanding care, guidance and support and the outstanding aspects of personal development are strengths of the school. One student commented, 'The houses are like families and the school is one big family.' Another parent commented in terms of family, 'My child has done extremely well at Brentford. Their consistency of care and encouragement has been outstanding – Well done!'
- Teaching is consistently good. Inspectors observed 80% of lessons that were good or better. The school has demonstrated a high degree of sensitivity to the needs of its students and the curriculum makes a significant contribution to their personal development and well-being. Cross-curricular provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is very good. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well with students' active participation in front of the class.
- Provision in the sixth form is effective. Attainment is at least in line with national averages and constitutes good progress, including for those students who speak English as an additional language. Inspectors' observations confirm that progress in lessons is good, reflecting the good teaching students receive. Overall, therefore, outcomes are judged to be good. The school acknowledges the need to refine its analysis of outcome data, including in courses where consortium arrangements are in place, more precisely. It has reorganised the management of the sixth form accordingly. Although this has not had time yet to become fully embedded, there is already evidence of improvements in leadership and monitoring.
- Most aspects of leadership and management are good and, as GCSE results show, have brought about marked improvements in attainment. Sensibly, the school's focus has been on improving students' confidence to sit examinations and here the school has seen significant success. The effectiveness of the

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governing body has improved from satisfactory to good since the last inspection. Arrangements for safeguarding are good and carefully monitored. Community cohesion is outstanding. The school is closely involved with a Rwandan School.

- The school acknowledges weaknesses in its communication with some parents and carers to ensure that all are given enough notice of impending events in the school.
- The school has demonstrated its good capacity for improvement through meticulous self-evaluation over the past year. This, together with its record of good support for equal opportunities for all girls, puts it in a good position to sustain its drive for improvement over the next year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve communication with parents and carers and give better notice of future events.
- Ensure that procedures for monitoring student performance in the sixth form, including through its consortium arrangements, become more comprehensive and rigorous.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students enjoy learning and achieve well. GCSE results in 2011 were particularly improved, with the proportion gaining five or more good GCSEs including English and mathematics rising to above the national average. Results show a substantial rise over the previous year and the overall picture is one of sustained improvement. Most students make good progress and learn well as a result of the good teaching throughout the school. Students acquire knowledge, skills and understanding and show much enjoyment whenever learning is active and challenging. Very many students who have English as an additional language are given strong support by a dedicated team of specialists. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have good support to enable them to make good progress. The school has been particularly successful in this regard this year in mathematics.

Students feel outstandingly safe and their outstanding contributions to the school community are underpinned by the presence of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Bullying is rare within the school – any instances of bullying are swiftly dealt with. Behaviour is good overall, and often outstanding in lessons. Students respond particularly well to the many opportunities they are given for active learning. However, in the small minority of lessons where lesson introductions are too long students' interest begins to wane. The numerous opportunities for charitable fundraising are taken up with great enthusiasm by all students; the strong inter-house system also makes a valuable contribution to this work. Members of the school council take an exceptionally active part in school life, deciding, for example, on the change of school uniform. There are clear tracking and intervention strategies in

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place that have improved attendance. The good results in English and mathematics and the good behaviour around the school mean the students are well prepared for life beyond school. Social, moral and cultural strengths are outstanding and spiritual development is good. The rich social, cultural and linguistic mix within the school population is well used to develop high levels of appreciation and understanding of diversity, both globally and within the United Kingdom. Consequently, students evince exceptional levels of tolerance and preparedness to see different perspectives in social and cultural issues.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The success of teaching is, in large part, the result of the good use made of digital technology to support students' learning. This can be seen in the creative use of smartboards and digital photography. In the best lessons, girls are challenged to practise their skills in creative and problem-solving tasks. Teachers create active learning opportunities that successfully engage students. In the upper school, teachers plan carefully to support those who need specific or personalised help. Teachers provide students with good opportunities for self and peer assessment – this is especially strong in drama. All teachers are aware of students' previous attainment but need to use this more consistently when planning lessons so they can meet the needs of the full range of students.

Provision for media education is one of the strengths of the school because ICT, drama and media studies are of the highest quality. Support for the development of

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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literacy, a school priority because of the large number of students with English as an additional language, has been effective. There are regular intakes from Asia and the good support these students receive is reflected in the school's Gold Award for International School status. In 2011, one group in Year 11 made excellent progress on a specialist Art BTEC course and combined it with intensive extra English teaching – this group enjoyed a high level of success. All students' self-esteem and confidence are supported very effectively through their personal education programme taught by the high-quality drama department. The health and social care courses are good and lead into BTEC and apprenticeship schemes.

Care, guidance and support are key strengths of the school, supporting good or better outcomes for all students. Each student is known individually and the house system is an excellent vehicle for strengthening students' sense of belonging to the school community. The leadership in the school by the community leader and head of student services is very good. Students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are exceptionally well looked-after and safeguarding arrangements are effective. Peer mentoring makes an excellent contribution to the culture of promoting well-being. Students receive excellent guidance about the next stages of their education, entering the sixth form or gaining employment.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff and students speak very well of the direct involvement of the acting headteacher, her deputy and her senior leaders and managers in the life of the school. They are viewed as a powerful, motivating force. The impact of their leadership can be seen in the high-quality education provided by the school, the good progress made by students and the creation of a school ethos that is friendly, welcoming and mutually supportive. They work closely with good subject leaders who are actively involved in the leadership and management of the school. Managers share effective practice through monitoring lessons and this is proving very successful in helping the school to raise performance in all departments. Self-evaluation strategies are good. However, the lack of wholly effective communication systems is a criticism of a small minority of parents. Effective safeguarding procedures are in place despite the difficulties generated by a site with so many buildings. Policies and their impact are updated annually to ensure that they reflect the best practice. Professional support and in-service days are regularly used to raise awareness of child protection and teaching and learning issues.

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The governing body has a range of expertise. It has given particularly good support to the acting headteacher and senior staff on areas such as finance and the outstanding promotion of community cohesion. The school benefits from the arrival in Brentford of minority ethnic groups from around the United Kingdom. For example, students from other parts of the United Kingdom bring their experiences to the school. The effective promotion of equal opportunities leads to harmony across all ethnic groups with no incidents of discrimination and has improved the performance of girls needing additional support.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Overall the sixth form performs well. Students' progress is good and generally good teaching enables students to learn effectively. Programmes and activities meet the needs of most students well along with high quality care, support and guidance. Teachers place a very strong focus on developing key skills necessary for examination success. Much of the emphasis is on meeting the need of the examiners as, for example, in writing essays which include a strong conclusion. The curriculum choice is wide and covers academic and vocational courses at level 2 and level 3. Ambitious plans and high expectations are shared and welcomed by the staff and students. Effective use is made of technology. Key life skills, such as independence, reliability and time management, are reflected for students in the models set by teachers. Students feel safe and make a positive contribution to the school. The school has revised arrangements for oversight of the sixth form which are leading to notable improvements in leadership and management. Monitoring of the impact of consortium arrangements are securely in place but this, along with detailed monitoring of student performance over time, is not yet fully developed. However,

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this is not preventing both outcomes for students and provision from being good.

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	3

Views of parents and carers

A low percentage of parents and carers returned questionnaires. The majority of the returns suggested that the parents and carers are happy with the school. They were particularly pleased that the school did not accept unsatisfactory behaviour. However, one message came through – the school did not communicate events far enough in advance for parents. One parent commented, 'Information is given out too late.' There are also positive comments. One parent wrote, 'Definitely the best education I could have asked for my daughter and her results support this.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brentford School for Girls 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 963 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	35	56	56	9	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	49	49	49	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	40	50	50	7	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	30	57	57	6	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	29	29	61	61	7	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	26	61	61	12	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	21	65	65	10	10	0	0
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)	25	25	50	50	14	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	28	59	59	9	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	30	60	60	8	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	24	58	58	8	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	31	31	55	55	9	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	39	52	52	7	7	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



29 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Brentford School for Girls, Brentford , TW8 0PG

We are writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. You will be pleased to know that we judge Brentford School for Girls to be a good school. We were very impressed with so much of what we saw and heard over the two days.

These are the main findings of our inspection.

- We were impressed by the outstanding care, support and guidance you are given by the school – and your response to that care, guidance and support.
- All girls were eager learners in the classes we visited.
- All groups of students in the Years 7 to 11 and sixth formers make at least good progress.
- Teaching is at least good and at times outstanding.
- The school provides you with a good curriculum which is flexible and is underpinned by a wide choice of extra-curricular activities.
- The school's specialism in media studies has enhanced the curriculum of all subjects.
- We were impressed by the high levels of ICT skills and drama skills in the school.

The inspection team have identified particular priorities for both the sixth form and the main school and I know you will work together with staff to implement these priorities.

- The school has been asked to improve communication with parents and carers and give earlier notice of events.
- It has also been asked to ensure that procedures for monitoring student performance in the sixth form, including through its consortium arrangements, become more comprehensive and rigorous.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans
Lead inspector

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