

# Highgate Wood Secondary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102154
<b>Local Authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	376673
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Daniell HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1385
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	192
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Charles Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patrick Cozier
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25–26 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Montenotte Road London N8 8RN
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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	24–25 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 40 lessons taught by 39 teachers. They observed the school's work, and looked in detail at achievement data, school improvement planning and self-evaluation documentation, records of lesson observations and minutes of meetings. Discussions took place with leaders and managers, teachers, students, members of the governing body and organisations with which the school works in partnership. The inspection team scrutinised 149 questionnaires from parents and carers, 149 from students and 54 from members of staff.

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

- To what extent the school is effectively narrowing any remaining gaps in the attainment of different groups of students.
- Whether the sharp rise in attainment at Key Stage 4 in 2011 is sustainable for other cohorts coming through the school, particularly in English.
- The impact of leaders at all levels, including the governing body, in embedding ambition and driving improvement.

## Information about the school

Highgate Wood Secondary School is a larger than average school, with specialist Arts College status. Just over 50% of students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and there are more boys than girls on roll. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. A larger than average proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend the school, but the proportion of these with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.

The school holds the International School award. It also has Healthy School status, as well as the Leading Parent Partnership Award.

**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

Students at Highgate Wood Secondary School enjoy a good quality of education because the good teaching they receive secures equally effective learning and progress. Achievement is good with students making good progress from their starting points to reach above average attainment. A very large majority of students say they feel safe in school, a belief supported by an overwhelming majority of parents and carers. This is in line with the school's motto 'Everyone Matters'. This, coupled with good behaviour in lessons and around the school, creates a positive and inclusive learning ethos, where the business of the day is to develop young and creative individuals who are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. The headteacher sets high standards for behaviour, which is reflected in the above average proportion of fixed-term exclusions recorded by the school. Students' attendance is average overall, but is inconsistent for some students in Year 11. However, punctuality is good and the school develops students' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology well. An emphasis on the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and the good development of leadership skills is evident through the numerous roles and responsibilities entrusted to students, who speak positively about the difference they feel they make in school. Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a positive contribution to their personal development and achievements.

The well-planned curriculum serves the needs of students because it successfully identifies barriers to progress and makes the most of opportunities provided by organisations with which the school works in partnership. The specialist subject areas make a good contribution to students' creative skills and to their development of confidence and self-esteem. Students benefit from good teaching, which is effectively led and managed. This is further enhanced by good use of assessment to support learning. Well-targeted care, guidance and support enable students to maximise their potential because their specific needs are correctly identified, and intervention strategies are carefully and sensitively implemented.

Leaders and managers demonstrate an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their self-evaluation documentation. This approach towards school improvement, which has clearly led to improved outcomes for students, gives the school a good capacity to sustain further improvement. Lines of communication are clear and members of the school's community contribute successfully towards implementing the headteacher's vision of high expectations and high achievement for all students irrespective of their starting points. Members of the

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governing body fulfil their statutory duties well, particularly with regard to the safeguarding of children and in their promotion of community cohesion. The school engages parents and carers well in their children's education and one of the school's particular strengths in this area is the way in which it uses both questionnaires and web page blogs to gather views, on which it then acts.

The popular sixth form enjoys a positive reputation locally and, through good leadership and management, it complements the provision provided in Years 7 to 11. Students' good achievement is secured through an appropriately diverse curriculum offer and they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Sixth-form students speak highly of the provision and are empowered to develop as increasingly independent learners.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise achievement from good to outstanding by:
  - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching, and minimising that which is satisfactory
  - ensuring that all teachers plan thoroughly and explicitly to meet the needs of all learners
  - providing students with increased opportunities for detailed written and oral feedback on their performance, with clear guidance on how to improve.
- Reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions by:
  - reviewing the current behaviour support systems
  - exploring the possibility of other internal actions that provide alternatives to fixed-term exclusions.
- Improve attendance so that it remains at least above average for all year groups.

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

**2**

Students enjoy a positive experience in the classroom, where learning is mostly good, with little that is satisfactory or below. In the better lessons, teachers plan well for learning, making effective use of the information available on different groups of students. When planning is at its most thorough, students make good progress and become empowered as independent learners. In a Year 10 science lesson on genes and variation, students made outstanding progress because the teacher had tailor-made the lesson to meet their individual needs and presented students with many opportunities to assess their rate of learning throughout the lesson. Students were clear about what they had to do to make progress to the next stage of their learning.

Students' prior attainment on entry to the school is variable but is broadly in line with the national average. Attainment in 2011 showed a sharp increase, compared with the previous two years, with 68% of students gaining five or more good grades at GCSE level including English and mathematics. This represents an increase of 22%

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compared with 2010. Strategies to raise attainment and accelerate progress in English have been particularly successful. Students who speak English as an additional language achieve particularly well, as do most students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school recognised and understood the reasons why the small number of students, designated as having a higher level of need on the special educational needs register underperformed in 2010. Girls perform slightly better than boys but any gap in the rate of progress is narrowing. Available data for the current Year 11, and for other year groups, demonstrate that this accelerated rate of progress is planned to continue, including in English and for those students who are designated as having a higher level of need on the special educational needs register.

Students’ behaviour is good and they are considerate towards each other. The behaviour policy is underpinned by the principles of the 4Cs (consideration, cooperation, courtesy and contribution) and this is evident. The more recently amended behaviour for learning policy is also starting to demonstrate impact, with fewer referrals being made compared with last year. However, the proportion of fixed-term exclusions is higher than one might expect and consequently procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are due to be reviewed. Students told inspectors that they feel extremely safe when in school because they know any reported incidents will be dealt with swiftly. They are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and a large number participate in one of the extra-curricular activities provided by the school, which they appreciate. A strong school council represents the ‘student voice’ admirably and students support each other well through peer mentoring and reading programmes. Many students work hard to raise funds for local, national and global charities. Students are well prepared for the world of work and are actively encouraged to work collaboratively through a range of entrepreneurial activities, for example by organising the annual arts festival. Students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and secures a harmonious school underpinned by mutual respect.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching is good or better, which secures high levels of motivation and engagement. In the best lessons, teachers' meticulous planning, combined with fast pace and high expectations, enthuses students and provides an appropriate level of challenge. Additional adults in the classroom are well deployed and accelerate rates of progress for those requiring support. Questioning is well targeted and teachers check for understanding regularly, using a variety of methods. Scrutiny of students' work demonstrated a correlation between high quality marking and good learning and progress. In less effective lessons, marking is less helpful because it does not indicate clearly enough how students can improve. Quite often in these lessons, teachers do not take the different needs of students into account when planning and instead deliver the same lesson to all, which limits the progress made by some.

The broad and balanced curriculum provides for the learning needs of all students, and curriculum development is continuing. The school's decision to start the new timetable in the summer term facilitates the provision of an enhanced curriculum, with a full two-year entitlement to GCSE courses. Good provision is made for those students entering in Year 7 with low literacy skills. The fortnightly enrichment days open up a wealth of opportunities to make learning exciting and engage learners through activities that include medieval days and enterprise days. Students can follow appropriate curriculum pathways at Key Stage 4, depending on their needs, including GCSE, BTEC and Level 1 and 2 courses at local colleges. The impact of the school's specialist subjects on the curriculum is strong, and effective links have been established with London theatres and art galleries, which serve to enhance the provision.

Students succeed at Highgate Wood because of the good quality care, guidance and support they receive. Particularly strong is the support provided for the more vulnerable students who are at risk of underachieving. The good work carried out in school in the Independent Learning Centre, as well as the effective work with external agencies, offers these students a reason to come to school. The school has good systems to manage students' transfer from primary schools, and guidance offered at the end of Key Stage 4 is well targeted and valued by students, many of whom elect to continue their studies in the school's sixth form.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders and managers have established effective systems to monitor, evaluate and review the school's work. School improvement planning is effective and informed by in-depth analyses conducted by both middle and senior leaders, which allow them to prioritise actions and secure improved outcomes. Key to the school's improved outcomes is the headteacher's renewed emphasis on high expectations and the setting of challenging targets. Capacity at middle leadership level has strengthened, and both heads of department and heads of learning have full ownership of the areas they manage. Roles allocated to the senior leadership team play to strengths and senior leaders demonstrate an accurate understanding of measures required to raise standards further. Inspectors concurred with the school's data on the quality of teaching and noted the effective deployment of the two advanced skills teachers who form part of a working group which aims to embed good practice. Whole-school training on key aspects of effective teaching, including the matching of work to the needs of students, has been provided and is steadily becoming embedded. Some subject areas deliver this aspect of teaching more effectively than others, however senior leaders are aware of this.

Members of the governing body have a good understanding of what constitutes an effective school and ask challenging questions of leaders and managers and hold them to account well. The governing body promotes community cohesion well. As a result, students have a good understanding of the diversity within the school and beyond. Effective links with local and national communities raise students' awareness of their place in the community, and strong global links with faraway communities, including India, South Africa and a range of European countries, offer them valuable opportunities to share experiences and learn from others.

The school has a positive relationship with parents and carers. Initiatives including the appointment of a Turkish home liaison officer, and an effective parent staff association, demonstrate the school's commitment to engaging parents and carers in the education of their children. As a result, attendance at school events arranged for parents and carers is high. The school engages in some productive partnership work with other organisations, which has a direct impact on students' outcomes, for example working with consultants from the local authority, local businesses and colleges.

Good safeguarding procedures are secured through regular staff training, the



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delivery of the curriculum and effective risk assessment systems. Equal opportunities and tackling discrimination enjoy a high profile in the school and the school monitors entitlement and the impact of strategies by different groups of students. Hence, any remaining gaps in performance are identified and are narrowing quickly.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

Students in the sixth form make good progress based on their starting points. In 2011, 98% of students attained grades A\* to E at A level, with 43% gaining grades A\* to B. There remains a slight variation in performance in some subject areas, but performance in most areas is strong. Students’ independent study skills are also strong, and effective support and guidance help to secure places at universities for a large proportion of students. They make a positive contribution to the school and wider community through the running of clubs and working with local primary schools.

Some of the most effective teaching is in the sixth form and students enjoy positive relationships with their teachers. The sixth form curriculum is developed and adapted continually, and academic support provided by tutors is valued, particularly when applying for places in higher education.

Sixth form leaders and managers demonstrate drive and enthusiasm, which has resulted in improved outcomes. They demonstrate a detailed understanding of the variation in performance in different subject areas and plans are in place to iron out

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any remaining inconsistencies. Information on students’ experiences in the sixth form is used effectively to improve the provision, and the use of performance data is being applied to better effect. Students are proud of the sixth form and willingly take on roles which develop their leadership skills.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
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

A small proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and these responses were supportive of the school’s work. A few added additional comments to express concerns about the amount of homework set and about some aspects of teaching. Scrutiny of students’ planners shows that homework is set on a regular basis and inspectors noted that many subjects in Year 7 set homework which takes the form of a longer-term project. Inspectors also found the quality of teaching to be good. An overwhelming majority believe the school keeps their children safe and a large majority believe their children enjoy school. An area where parents and carers tended to agree to a lesser extent, albeit a small minority, is on how the school helps them to support their children with their learning. Inspectors noted that the school reports on students’ progress regularly and has effective systems in place to engage parents and carers in their child’s education.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highgate Wood Secondary 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 149 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1385 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	37	85	57	8	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	58	39	88	59	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	44	30	86	58	16	11	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	28	89	60	15	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	22	94	63	14	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	25	17	92	62	28	19	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	15	99	66	21	14	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)	36	24	84	56	13	9	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	35	23	89	60	19	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	24	89	60	14	9	6	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	18	93	62	14	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	26	90	60	10	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	53	36	82	55	8	5	2	1

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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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 November 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Highgate Wood Secondary School, London N8 8RN**

Thank you for making the inspection team welcome during our visit to your school. You told us that you enjoy and feel safe in your school, and that you learn a lot in lessons. These are our main findings.

- Highgate Wood is a good school and you make good progress because of the effective teaching you experience. Many teachers plan their lessons well, using the information they have about you as learners, however, there are a few who could make better use of this information. Your work is marked regularly, but teachers do not always explain clearly enough how you can improve.
- Your behaviour is good in lessons and around school, but the number of fixed-term exclusions is above average, as your headteacher has very high expectations of you. Attendance is average and is better in Key Stage 3.
- Your school provides you with many opportunities to develop your leadership skills and to participate in extra-curricular activities, and it prepares you well for the world of work.
- The curriculum is good because it is designed to meet your needs, and the arts specialism provides opportunities for you to be creative.
- Your school guides and supports you well, particularly if you are likely to underachieve.
- Leaders, managers and members of the governing body do a good job and know what they have to do to make the school even better. They regularly gather views of parents, carers and students, and work well with other organisations to improve your outcomes.
- Your school has a good sixth form which is led and managed well.

We have asked your school's leaders and managers to work towards outstanding achievement, to reduce the number of exclusions and to improve attendance. We ask you to model the very best behaviour at all times and to attend school regularly, particularly if you are in Year 11.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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