Heston Community School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102537
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	376736
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	Meena Kumari Wood HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
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	1272
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Lawton
Headteacher	Mr Phil Ward
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 September 2008
School address	Heston Road Hounslow TW5 0QR
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

Meena Wood	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Leake	Additional inspector
Robert Smith	Additional inspector
Desmond Dunne	Additional inspector
James Coyle	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed 34 teachers teaching 35 lessons, of which five were joint observations with members of the senior team. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to a few support lessons and to the hearing impaired unit, where specialist help is provided by trained teachers and assistants. A further 21 teachers were observed during classroom visits where inspectors specifically looked at students' assessed work. Meetings were held with five groups of pupils, parents and carers, governors and school staff, including the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, three case studies of vulnerable students, the safeguarding and equality policies, and the minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, they analysed 134 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This school is much larger than the average sized secondary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of pupils are from Indian and Pakistani backgrounds; a smaller proportion is White British and Black African. Although the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high, very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportions of pupils identified as being disabled or having special educational needs and those with a statement of special educational needs are below average; most of these have hearing and visual impairments and cognitive learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is higher than the national average for secondary schools. The school is above the current floor standard, whereby the government sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school specialises in visual arts and is a trust/foundation school, partnered with the National Deaf Children's Society and the University of the Arts, London. It provides a range of extended services for pupils and adults living in the local community. The school has gained a number of awards, including the International School award and the Artsmark Gold.

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	**2**

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

Key findings

- This is a good school. The sixth form is satisfactory and improving. The students, parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education and care. GCSE results have improved year-on-year and are now well above the national average, most notably in English, mathematics and science. In the sixth form, A level results are within the national average.
- The majority of the teaching is good with some that is outstanding in Years 7 to 11. In some lessons, teachers do not provide activities and tasks with sufficient challenge and, although assessment activities are used in all subjects, they are employed with varying levels of effectiveness to plan learning. In the sixth form, teaching is satisfactory with some that is good.
- The school provides good quality individual support for disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English. As a result, the majority make good progress. Students who do not attend regularly progress well as a result of good mentoring. The school works effectively with external partners to help students stay involved in education.
- Students behave very well and the vast majority are keen learners. Students from a range of different backgrounds and cultures get on very well together. Previous high levels of exclusions have reduced significantly. The strong emphasis on students' personal development and aspiration encourages a high number to progress to post-16 education and into appropriate employment and training. The school is currently undertaking a review of the appropriateness of some of the sixth form courses and elements of advice and guidance given to students.
- The headteacher and his leaders and managers know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Strong performance management and an extensive programme of professional development for staff have improved the quality of teaching significantly in Years 7 to 11. Close monitoring of all students' achievement, coupled with effective support, has resulted in rising standards. The governing body is proactive and supports leaders and managers effectively.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop greater consistency in assessment across subjects, ensuring that:
  - all teachers build on the good practice identified in English
  - information on students' abilities, knowledge and skills is used to plan more challenging lesson activities and tasks which extend their learning
  - the marking of students' work fully informs students how to improve and all know how to achieve their aspirational targets.
- Improve the quality of the provision in the sixth form by:
  - being more rigorous in the monitoring of the quality of teaching
  - providing appropriate curriculum pathways which cater for all abilities and needs
  - giving more accurate advice and guidance in Year 11 for students progressing to Year 12
  - providing structured induction and support for Year 11 students so that there is a good match between their knowledge and skills and the entry requirements for their chosen courses.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Inspectors agree with parents and carers that students' achievement is good. Over the last three years, the proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has steadily risen and is now above the national average. Examination results in the sixth form have declined over the last three years but students make satisfactory progress given their starting points. The school's actions in the last year are beginning to address successfully weak performance in AS level subjects and the retention of students from Year 12 to Year 13. Very few students leave the sixth form without a place at university, employment with training or a suitable course in further education.

Students in Years 7 to 11 make good progress and the majority are well-motivated, enthusiastic learners. Even when lessons are uninspiring, students pay close attention and are responsive. Most are respectful of their teachers and other adults and aspire to do well. Students enjoy lessons and are more actively involved where they are clear about the learning objectives and the success criteria and are given a range of opportunities to reflect on their knowledge and skills. These include discussions with one another and skilful questioning by teachers. In these cases, they are extended in their learning and those who are at an early stage of learning English are supported through more structured tasks.

Assessment information is used effectively to provide targeted support in and out of lessons for students at risk of underachieving. As a result of interventions, for example improved links with parents and carers, White British and Eastern European students make satisfactory progress, with some making good progress. The small

number of looked after children make good progress as a result of personal mentoring and one-to-one tuition.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is largely good, and in a few cases outstanding. In lessons where students are encouraged to learn in depth, the tasks are structured well and in line with students' abilities. This ensures that all students are fully engaged and acquiring suitable knowledge and skills. Many lessons help consolidate spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of students' personal development. In one good Year 12 media lesson, students discussing the moral ethics of advertising reflected maturely on the subjective nature of offensive images and drew interesting comparisons between their own Asian cultures and White British cultural attitudes.

The responses from parents, carers and students to the inspection questionnaires reflect the overwhelming majority view that teaching is good. In those lessons across the school where teaching is only satisfactory, this is because students are not fully challenged in their learning through the activities and tasks; moreover, the pace of learning is too slow with teachers focusing more on simply giving information than on developing genuine understanding. For instance, in one French lesson, the tasks set were too simple and did not enable students to practise their communication skills, vocabulary and grammar in the context of world issues.

Assessment activities, including peer- and self-assessment, are used inconsistently across subjects. Where these activities are employed well, students reflect and understand what they have learnt and, importantly, what they need to do next. In English, excellent use of 'learning ladders' has helped students understand how they are being assessed in their coursework and examinations and most develop a high standard of writing.

Students' work is marked frequently. In most cases, the marking provides students with clearly detailed information about where they have been successful and what they need to do to improve. Teachers set realistic and aspirational targets, which the majority of students know and understand. However, the quality of the marking varies within subjects, so that in some lessons, students are not clear about precisely what they need to do to attain their targets.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The students overwhelmingly said that they feel safe in school and that adults are very approachable if they have concerns. All students have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside of school. Despite the cramped nature of the play areas, students behave responsibly towards one another, especially during break times, and evidence from parents, carers and students indicates that behaviour over time is good. Attendance is above the national average and students arrive punctually to school and to lessons. The majority of students behave well in lessons, but occasionally, if the activity is not sufficiently

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absorbing, a few lose attention and chatter.

Incidences of bullying are rare and the majority of parents, carers and students express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with such occurrences. Students who are at risk of underachieving, internally excluded or persistent absentees greatly benefit from the learning support and mentoring activities in the 'Bubble' area. For instance, through effective mentoring and close links with his parents, one potentially vulnerable student improved his attendance from 53% to 88%. These supportive approaches, coupled with internal sanctions, have helped reduce disruptive behaviour in lessons, in particular for certain groups of students, and reduced the number of exclusions overall.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and other leaders and managers have focused successfully on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching through rigorous performance management. The clear focus on improving the performance of satisfactory teachers through coaching, peer observations and professional development twilight sessions has resulted in more good lessons. Exemplary practice in English is beginning to be shared across the curriculum. The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11, but internal observations of sixth form lessons are not as rigorous, as observers do not focus sufficiently on students' acquisition of knowledge and skills.

The clarity of direction and very good partnership work with parents, carers and external agencies have combined well to shape the ethos of the school and to ensure that all students have an equal chance to do well. One parent reported how much she valued the 'consistent warm support for her daughter in her academic work and personal development'. Sharper monitoring of students' performance, along with challenging targets and the tracking of progress, has resulted in raising attainment above the national average by the end of Year 11. The school leaders have demonstrated their good capacity to bring about sustained improvement and this has been acknowledged by parents, carers and students.

The impact of the curriculum on students' outcomes is good. The school has used its specialism and partnership with the University of the Arts (London) to raise students' achievement through a good range of creative opportunities, for example in photography and textiles. Personalised pathways with external providers enable students to pursue vocational courses and apprenticeships. Extra-curricular activities, for example the Cultural Fusion Show and 'super learning days', engage students and consolidate their cultural and social development. Year 7 students benefit from a learning-to-learn curriculum which helps them have a positive transition from primary school. Students receive good advice and guidance on next steps in Year 9 but the quality of course guidance in Year 11, coupled with the limited choice of pathways, have not helped some sixth form students successfully complete their courses. The school has prioritised a review of the provision, along with the quality of induction and guidance.

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The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations in safeguarding and has given a strong impetus to improving the attainment and progress of different groups of students, in line with the school's equalities action plan. Acting as 'link governors' within curriculum areas has helped them become more knowledgeable about the quality of students' learning experiences. One governor regularly spends time listening to students read, especially disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Students take on leadership roles within the school and out of school in the community, for example as 'reading buddies'. They express their views through surveys and through the school council and are also asked to say what they think about the quality of teaching. This information is used to influence the school's self-evaluation and development plan priorities.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

13 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Heston Community School, Hounslow TW5 0QR

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

Heston is a good school and the sixth form is satisfactory. Most of you enjoy your lessons, make good progress and do better than average at GCSE. In most lessons we observed well-planned tasks and activities, but in some lessons, planning was not clear enough to help you to make the progress of which you are capable. However, the school is providing those of you who need it with good subject support and guidance outside lessons. Stimulating extra-curricular and leadership opportunities help you develop as responsible citizens and most of you receive good guidance on your next steps. However, a minority of you in the sixth form do not always continue your studies into Year 13 as you are not given the best advice; additionally, the school knows it needs to improve the sixth form curriculum offer.

We have asked senior leaders to do the following things.

- Improve your progress and GCSE attainment further in all subjects, by giving you more detailed feedback on your work and ensuring that teachers always plan challenging activities and tasks in line with your abilities, so that all of you fully achieve your potential

- Ensure that the sixth form curriculum meets the needs of all students and that in Year 11 you receive the best possible guidance to help you choose the courses best for you and that you have all the necessary support you need to help you succeed in Years 12 and 13.

We wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

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