

# Dormers Wells High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	101930
<b>Local authority</b>	Ealing
<b>Inspection number</b>	395346
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Clare Gillies

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>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1072
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Flynn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Aylott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Dormers Wells Lane Southall UB13HZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8813 8671
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8813 8861
<b>Email address</b>	info@dormerswells.ealing.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	17–18 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395346



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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Clare Gillies	Additional Inspector
Howard Jones	Additional Inspector
Mandy Snook	Additional Inspector
David Wolfson	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 40 part-lessons, several of which were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. During one period, an inspector visited several Year 7 lessons for a short time and another inspector toured the information and communication technology (ICT) rooms. Inspectors saw over 40 teachers in lessons, tutor sessions and an assembly. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at students' work, the school's improvement plan, records of lesson observations and data related to exclusions, attendance, safeguarding and current standards and progress. They looked at the school's analysis of past performance. Inspectors took account of the on-line Parents' View survey in planning the inspection.

Inspectors considered responses to the questionnaires from 397 parents and carers, 142 students and 53 members of staff. GCSE and sixth form examinations were underway during the inspection so it was only possible to watch a few, mainly revision, lessons in Years 11 to 13. Nevertheless, meetings were held with students in all years as well as senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and staff.

## Information about the school

This slightly larger than average-sized school opened its sixth form in 2009. A higher than average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost two thirds of students speak English as an additional language. There are many different ethnic groups. Two of these, Indian and Black African, represent about 20% each of the school community. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is twice the national average. The majority of needs are related to moderate learning or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. A small number of students have hearing impairment. A new specialist unit for them will open in September 2012 when the school moves into its new building. Mobility is high; new arrivals (some of whom are refugees) often have limited English and/or experience of schooling. The school has many quality marks and awards, including the Inclusion Mark, the Cultural Diversity Diamond Award and Leading Edge status. It has specialist status for mathematics, computing and applied learning. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

A serious incident that occurred at the school since the previous education inspection has been investigated by the appropriate authorities and is now closed. Ofsted does

not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind. The welfare provision in the school was evaluated against the regulations that are in place and inspection judgements are based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. The sixth form is good and has developed significantly in its third year. All students receive outstanding academic and pastoral support and quickly settle in this most calm and harmonious school. The school is not yet outstanding because the good progress most students make, particularly evident in English and mathematics, is not seen consistently in all subjects and higher attainers do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Students' achievement is good. Several factors affected Year 11 students' progress in 2011, and GCSE results were below expectations. This interrupted the upward trend in standards since the last inspection, which led to results matching those seen nationally for the first time in 2010; students are attaining at similar levels to 2010 this year. Students concentrate very well in practically all lessons and are enthusiastic learners.
- Behaviour is good overall but exemplary in many lessons and around the school. Students have very positive attitudes to learning. Above average attendance continues to improve. Students feel very safe and safeguarding procedures are excellent.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, make lessons interesting and build up students' confidence. They focus on extending students' literacy skills, for example by defining subject-specific vocabulary, and often link work to the outside world. They do not always prepare work to match the varied abilities of students, especially higher attainers, or give students enough time to work independently.
- It is the headteacher's and senior leaders' outstanding leadership that has generated improved attainment and progress and the quality of assessment, teaching and professional development; the latter is effectively linked to performance management. The high quality citizenship and personal, social and health education (CPSHE) programme contributes to the outstanding provision within the curriculum for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The delivery and use of information and communication technology (ICT) is not fully up to date as its development has been hampered by limited facilities, now being addressed in the new building.

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

- Increase the percentage of GCSE and sixth form results matching the national average in 2013 by:
  - intensifying line managers' and middle leaders' already excellent analysis of performance data to highlight even earlier any underachievement and to respond ever more swiftly with appropriate action
  - strengthening teachers' planning to match students' different needs and abilities, particularly that of high attainers
  - giving students more time for independent and group learning in all years to help them think for themselves.
- Exploit the new building's facilities to deepen students' knowledge, understanding and use of modern technology by:
  - reviewing and updating the use of ICT in supporting learning
  - rapidly integrating the virtual learning environment into the full range of teaching and learning.

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## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

All groups of students achieve well. Almost all students feel they learn a lot and parents and carers agree; inspectors also agree. Students' enthusiasm is evident in many lessons. They enjoy working in groups or pairs and explaining their work to others. Their excellent relationships with teachers and focused concentration are key reasons why they learn so well, whether listening attentively as one student practises a complex drum rhythm, applying their numeracy skills to analyse geographical statistics or recording their ideas by using a mind map. They read well and develop good literacy skills which they use effectively in different subjects.

The improvement in GCSE results since the previous inspection reflect consistently good progress as students enter the school with well below average standards. In 2011, factors largely beyond the school's control, had a significantly adverse affect on Year 11 students' concentration, learning and progress and results in several subjects did not match national averages, but attainment has improved in the current Year 11. Students in other years continued to make good progress, as Year 11 students do now; attainment is broadly average.

In the sixth form's first two years, achievement was satisfactory in GCE subjects, better in those in BTEC and mixed in International Baccalaureate options. Learning from this, the courses offered, guidance given and the monitoring of students' progress improved significantly so that most students, particularly in Year 12, are achieving well.

School leaders know that girls achieve better than boys, especially in English. Taught extremely well, students learning English as an additional language make rapid progress and those who take GCSE in their home language attain high grades. When they leave school, most students write competently and read confidently but for some, accurately interpreting examination questions is difficult.

In 2011, some Asian and some African students did not make as much progress as the same students nationally but the gap has narrowed this year. Achievement by different ethnic groups fluctuates, depending on their numbers, when students entered the school, and their fluency in English. The numbers in the sixth form from diverse ethnic groups are too small to discern any differences in achievement. Students who enter the school after Year 7 or with disabilities or special educational needs make at least the same good progress as others.

### Quality of teaching

Many lessons start with an intriguing picture, such as one of Olympic athletes with the text, 'Hard work is necessary for success', or a challenge which captures

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students' interest. To strengthen literacy, teachers carefully define academic words and encourage reading, speaking, and, in most lessons, writing. In some subjects, particularly mathematics, the relevance to real life underpins learning, for example the significance of mathematics in medicine. The very large majority of parents and carers feel that their child is taught well; students and inspectors are equally convinced this is true. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are taught very well, especially in small-group sessions.

Not all teachers give students opportunities to work independently or to carry out research to better prepare them for sixth form work. Planning work to match students' different levels of ability has improved but it is not done consistently, particularly for higher attaining students. Students appreciate the time most teachers spend marking their books, reflected in the fact that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Sixth form students speak highly of the teaching they receive and particularly appreciate the one-to-one support teachers offer readily. Examples of outstanding practice were seen in the sixth form and the main school, often underpinned by teachers' strong subject knowledge, enthusiasm and confidence-inspiring style of delivery.

High quality assemblies, many tutor sessions and the very well-taught CPSHE lessons all contribute to students' understanding of the wider world and of personal issues. They also underpin the strong promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Over 90% of students feel that behaviour is good in lessons, although a lower percentage of parents and carers feel this is the case. Students admit that their behaviour early on in Year 7 is not as good as it is in later years and that they do not always work as hard for cover or supply teachers. Behaviour seen during the inspection was consistently good and often exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Students are polite and considerate; they greet visitors warmly and describe their fund-raising activities for charity enthusiastically. Sixth formers act as good role models by acting in a mature and sensible manner. The number of exclusions has fallen significantly in recent years, confirming that behaviour is good over time, at the same time as students' attendance has risen above the national average.

Several parents and carers referred positively to their child's enjoyment of, or happiness at, school. Almost all feel that their children are safe in school and students confirm this view. Students observe that 'bullying is not an issue we worry about because it doesn't happen here' but acknowledge that learning about different types of bullying, such as cyber bullying, is important and that if anything happens, the school responds immediately and firmly. They understand, if unenthusiastically,



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why mobile phones are not allowed in school! Younger students admit they are not at ease discussing topics such as homophobic bullying in CPSHE lessons but accept that they should be reflective about different values and lifestyles.

## Leadership and management

Equality of opportunity is at the core of school life. All staff, as well as members of the governing body, strive to ensure there is no discrimination. There is an all pervading ethnic harmony throughout the school. The school's systems ensure that all groups of pupils achieve equally well. Staff work efficiently, sensitively, and successfully to tackle discrimination and to remove barriers to learning faced by a large number of students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Students trust staff and confide in them if necessary. Support from external agencies and contact with parents and carers, using translators when necessary, are effective. The school is a key player in the local community. Members of the governing body as well as school staff make sure that all safeguarding requirements meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.

Senior and middle leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning are astute and accurate as is their use of students' progress data to support learning. Nevertheless, the school is aware that it could make even more effort in managing the use of assessment information to prevent any underachievement. Performance management is closely linked to individual accountability and professional development. Staff rate the latter highly and acknowledge that it has improved the quality of their teaching. The students' teaching and learning leadership group describes the features of good lessons accurately.

The curriculum is extremely well matched to students' needs, particularly in its wealth of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Many students visit museums or travel outside London for the first time on a school outing. All these contribute to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although a few students did very well studying for the International Baccalaureate, the school was right to focus on A levels in the sixth form's third year. Vocational courses for Years 10 to 13 students are relevant to the world of work; horticulture and ceramics are popular in Year 12. Practically all Year 12 students continued in education, employment or apprenticeship in 2011, with retention rates to Year 13 matching those seen nationally. Recent changes to the building, including a virtual learning environment, are beginning to address successfully the use of new technology in supporting teaching, especially in the sixth form.

The school's capacity to improve is outstanding because the stable and very effective leadership team is not complacent. Over the last five years, the headteacher has overseen an upward trend in achievement and the quality of teaching and improved standards of behaviour and attendance. The key features that generated good progress after the last inspection and which restored it this year are firmly established. The provision for the increasing number of hearing-impaired students will significantly improve when the specialist unit opens. The sound field system in

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the new building will make it easier for all students to hear well in any classroom, which is not the case at present.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](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.

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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



21 May 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Dormers Wells High School, Ealing UB1 3HZ**

We very much enjoyed the two days we spent in your school. We appreciated your warm welcome and how willingly you showed us where to go when we were lost! Yours is a good school. You told us that you feel very safe and enjoy school and that many of you intend to stay on into the sixth form, which is good and improving. You are taught well and you agreed that the academic and pastoral care you receive is outstanding.

We were most impressed with your often exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school, though you admitted that it is not quite so good early on in Year 7. You get on extremely well together and your respect for each other's different backgrounds generates an excellent harmonious atmosphere.

Progress was not quite so good in Year 11 last year so the GCSE results dropped a little. Now, you are all making good progress overall, especially in English and mathematics but not always consistently in all subjects. We have asked the school to make even more certain teachers prepare work at the right level for each of you, especially for those of you who complete work quickly, and to give you more time in lessons to work independently or in groups. We listened to your comments about the quality of lessons and agreed with them, for example that the content of some ICT lessons could be more engaging. We have asked the school to review how you learn ICT and to develop it even further in the new building.

The headteacher, senior leaders and all staff lead the school outstandingly well; you rightly appreciate the hours they put in to help you. Keep concentrating and working hard, especially those of you preparing for examinations. We hope you enjoy working in the new building next term.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies  
Lead inspector

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