

Hornsey School for Girls

Inderwick Road, London, N8 9JF

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Very effective systems, rigorously implemented, are central to the school's substantial improvement since the last inspection. Senior and middle leaders work together exceptionally well, responding most effectively to the outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher and the governing body. Robust direction and strong accountability are driving the school forward.
- Examination results have improved significantly over the past four years. Data on pupils' progress and the quality of their work show that attainment is higher again this year and achievements are even better than the good outcomes of 2012.
- The sixth form is good. Students, including the small number of boys, make excellent progress in many subjects, from below average starting points. Their attitudes to learning and their pride in the school are extremely positive.
- Teaching is effective and pupils are enthusiastic to learn in most lessons. Teachers respond very well to advice on how to improve further. They use their strong subject knowledge to challenge pupils and meet their widely varying needs. Some outstanding teaching enabled students to achieve exceptionally well.
- The school's vision of promoting a love of learning in a highly inclusive environment is being achieved, as seen in good or excellent attitudes in lessons. Around school, students are invariably polite and considerate and their conduct is usually very good as they respond positively to the school's expectations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Inconsistencies in practice, particularly in marking, homework and the deployment of supporting adults in the classroom, result in some teaching that does not get the very best out of students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 47 lessons, covering all years and most subjects; several were jointly observed with senior leaders. Almost all teachers accepted the offer of feedback from inspectors. On two occasions, inspectors walked through the school to gain an overview of the teaching and learning taking place.
- A wide range of documents were read, including policies, the school self-evaluation form and improvement plan, data on students' progress and attainment, attendance, behaviour and exclusion information, and safeguarding documents and records.
- The views of 49 parents and carers who had responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and other comments received, were discussed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with students in formal meetings, in lessons and around the school, about their views and expectations.
- Meetings were held with middle and senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a second governor, about their roles and responsibilities. A discussion took place with an officer from the local authority.

Inspection team

Peter McGregor, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ogugua Okolo-Angus	Additional Inspector
Colin Mackinlay	Additional Inspector
Peter Barnes	Additional Inspector
Veronica Young	Additional Inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hornsey School for Girls is a larger than average secondary school, with a small number of boys in the sixth form.
- Year 11 students' progress and attainment in 2012 examinations met the government's expected floor targets.
- A well-above-average proportion of students at the school, over half, are or have been eligible for free school meals, or are in care. The school receives additional funding to support the education of these students, called the pupil premium.
- The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of those who speak English as an additional language, are very high.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and need extra help with their education are above average at school action. The proportions of those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- No students on roll at the school are involved in education off-site at any other educational institution.
- The school has specialist performing arts status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is outstanding, ensuring that:
 - the school marking framework is consistently implemented, with clear targets for action followed up by teachers and students
 - supporting adults who work with students in lessons are used to maximum effect to improve progress and attainment
 - a more consistent approach is applied to the use of student planners, as much homework is now completed online, so that monitoring of homework set is accurate and helpful.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with below average attainment, have made good progress and attained average standards at age 16 in GCSE examinations. Current progress is better still and students are on track to attain above average standards this year.
- In 2012, students' progress in their best five GCSEs including English and mathematics was outstanding.
- Students made outstanding progress in modern foreign languages in 2011 and 2012 and improved their progress in English and humanities to outstanding in 2012.
- The proportion of students exceeding national expectations of progress is high in English and average in mathematics.
- Achievements dipped a little in mathematics in 2012. Following a careful analysis of the reasons for this, involving the type of examinations taken by the students, progress and attainment are now back on track.
- Science standards are improving as a result of a focus on providing appropriate courses, particularly for lower attaining students, and improved departmental management and teaching.
- Performing arts, particularly drama, are popular and highly successful as a result of students' participation in whole-school music, dance and drama productions, including tours abroad, as well as very effective teaching.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because teachers have key information on specific aspects of their needs and make use of this in good teaching.
- Some students of Black African origin and some of those for whom English is not their first language have been less successful in their studies than their peers. Their progress is now carefully tracked so that support is put in place if underachievement of individuals is identified.
- The school uses well the additional funding received to support those who are eligible for the pupil premium, significantly reducing the gap between the proportion of these students and others who achieved 5 A*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics in 2012. The progress of pupil premium students is much better than that achieved nationally and the gap is closing between their average points score and that of other students.
- A whole-school focus on improving students' reading has resulted in rapid progress and substantial improvements in students' tested reading ages. Successful strategies include tutor-time reading, specialist intervention for those students with low reading scores on entry to the school, and providing time in lessons to speak at length, as well as explicit teaching of reading in English and humanities lessons.
- At AS and A level, students' attainment is broadly average overall and their progress is extremely good.
- Sixth-form students make excellent progress in a wide range of subjects, particularly sociology, drama and media courses, reaching above average attainment. There is less success in some applied GCE courses and not all the sciences are equally successful. The students apply themselves very well in lessons even when teaching is not as good as the best.
- All students leaving the school in 2012 gained places at colleges or universities, or went into employment, reflecting their good or better reading, speaking, listening and numeracy skills.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Parents, in their responses to the school's own survey and in the Ofsted Parent View questionnaires, indicate that they are very pleased with the quality of teaching, which results in their children making good progress in their learning.
- Teaching is usually good or better because teachers plan well, building on progress data they

hold for each class and using a wide range of interesting approaches to engage and motivate students.

- Staff know the backgrounds of individual students as well as how successful they are. As they are aware of students' disabilities and special educational needs, and whether they have been or are entitled to free school meals or are looked after, they work hard at focusing on any identified needs, providing effective support. This, with specific intervention where underachievement is identified, is enabling gaps to be narrowed between these students' academic success and that of others.
- English and mathematics teaching meets the needs of the students because staff have excellent subject knowledge and use this to good effect in asking demanding questions and responding to students' requests for help. Misunderstandings are identified and ideas corrected, enabling students to make the progress they should.
- In an outstanding Year 9 English lesson, students' work on 'Romeo and Juliet' was carefully modelled and supported so that all made exceptional progress. The teaching focused on testing understanding, extended writing and independent creative effort. The students cooperated exceptionally well and worked together to create an environment where they supported one another.
- Students in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, calculating the volume of a pyramid, were equally successful because they too worked together, discussing issues and solutions with one another. The teaching challenged and engaged all in the class.
- The vision of the school, implemented by the staff, as a place of learning where all will succeed and enjoy their education, results in highly motivated students who respond very well to the high expectations apparent in the teaching.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is better than in the main school because almost all students have a positive approach to learning. This enables staff to challenge them and push for the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Teaching is much better than at the time of the last inspection.
- Not all students' books are marked thoroughly and, at times, targets for improvement are unclear or not followed up. Support staff are usually well deployed in lessons to support students' learning but occasionally greater use could be made of their knowledge and skills.
- Students' planners are used to record the homework set each week but, because so much of this work is now completed online, these documents are often incomplete. They provide a less than accurate picture of the large amount of homework completed by many students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The outstanding or good behaviour usually seen in lessons results from a common understanding of what is and is not acceptable conduct, strongly promoted by the senior leadership team. Students remark that there have been major improvements in behaviour over recent years.
- Students know that their conduct in lessons impacts on their achievements and most do not accept any form of disruption to their learning. Lessons are characterised by hardworking students keen to be as academically successful as they can be.
- Students are developing good independent and cooperative learning skills in lessons through opportunities for paired and small-group discussions. Relationships between students are extremely positive. The excellent attitudes to learning of many students underpin the substantial improvements in achievement over recent years.
- Parents have very positive views about their children's behaviour in school and know that they are safe, a picture supported by the inspection findings.
- Exclusions have fallen over the past three years from above to below average for fixed-term exclusions, and there have been no permanent exclusions in the past year. This reflects the very successful school approach, where support and guidance and punishment are balanced, enabling students to reintegrate successfully and not become repeat offenders.

- Bullying, including cyber bullying, is very infrequent. If and when it does occur, it is dealt with extremely well, minimising chances of reoccurrence. Students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including that related to homophobia, sexism, racism, disability and gender reassignment.
- Attendance has improved substantially over the past three years, from below to above average, as the school has implemented clear and tight procedures with rigorous follow-through if absences are unexplained. Targeted intervention is having a very positive impact.
- Punctuality to lessons is good, helped by the double lessons taught in several subjects which reduce student movement time. Punctuality to tutor time in the morning is not as good.
- Around the school during breaks and lunch periods, students' conduct is good. A few can be rather lively at times but, when seen, this is dealt with well. Students agree that the usually good or excellent behaviour in lessons does not, for a small minority, always translate into equivalent conduct when not under direct supervision during breaks and the lunch period.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The vision of excellence driven by the headteacher, and fully supported by her senior team, has been taken up enthusiastically by middle leaders and teachers. This has resulted in the substantial progress made over time in students' attainment, progress, attitudes and behaviour.
- School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate for all areas of school life. Targeted action and improvement are the responses to this analysis, indicating excellent capacity to improve.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic and is backed up by extensive professional development to guide change. The process is excellent and the outcome is seen in the improving picture of good and outstanding teaching and the very close similarity of school and inspection judgements.
- The extended leadership team includes assistant headteachers responsible for key faculty areas. These colleagues work closely with directors of learning, supporting teachers and students where issues are identified. Data are used exceptionally well to guide actions.
- The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is at the heart of the school, promoted through an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in the performing arts, through local community activities and within lessons. The highly inclusive school approach reflects its focus on providing equality of opportunity for all, building success on confident, well-behaved and happy students. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form.
- The curriculum has been substantially improved by reducing the number of subjects students take at GCSE, introducing vocational work, and matching sixth-form courses better to the prior knowledge of students. These changes are much appreciated by the students and, in the case of the sixth form, have resulted in a great improvement in the number of students completing courses they start. The curriculum offers a broad range of courses which meet students' needs.
- Students entitled to pupil premium funding are benefiting from a range of additional support. This includes extra learning assistants focusing on language acquisition, home-school support workers and booster classes, all of which are improving these pupils' achievements.
- Procedures for safeguarding students' welfare are excellent. Staff know child protection systems extremely well and apply them.
- Early entry for GCSE mathematics has a positive impact on students' attainment. All students continue with their mathematics education even if they achieve a GCSE A* early; they are taught AS mathematics.
- The local authority has provided substantial helpful support over recent years, which the school values. The amount of time made available has been reduced as the school has made such effective progress but it remains significant and supports further improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - is of the highest quality. The governing body interrogates school data in great detail, holding senior and middle leaders to account for anything less than excellence. They know the pupil performance information provided by Ofsted exceptionally well and how the school compares

with others nationally. They require improvement systems to be put in place where issues are identified. The close link between the quality of teaching and students' achievements is appreciated and records of lesson observation information are scrutinised with care. High-quality performance management information is received from the headteacher. The governing body ensures that only those staff deserving of promotion achieve it. Governors make their own visits to the school to gain first-hand information. Safeguarding procedures and policies are meticulously checked to ensure that all requirements are met. Detailed information on how pupil premium finance is spent is received by governors, who check this against data they receive on narrowing the gap between the achievements of these students and others. The governors provide induction training for new colleagues and attend courses to ensure they are knowledgeable about developments in education which could impact on the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102153
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	400533

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	1200
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Embleton
Headteacher	Carol Jones
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 May 2010
Telephone number	020 83486191
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