

Nonsuch High School for Girls

Ewell Road, Cheam, Sutton, SM3 8AB

Inspection dates 3-4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is outstanding. All groups of students make outstanding progress to attain high standards in examinations. Students from all groups achieve very well. All make significantly better progress than similar groups of students nationally.
- The sixth form is good. Standards remain high, building on students' outstanding GCSE results.
- The curriculum and co-curricular programme provide outstanding opportunities for students to broaden their experience and enjoyment of school life.
- Teaching is consistently good. Some is outstanding. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and students show outstanding attitudes to learning.
- The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding. Attendance is excellent. Strategies to ensure that all groups of students are included in school life are very effective.
- Governors and senior staff have ensured that, throughout the period of leadership change, the school has continued to run smoothly and high standards of work and behaviour maintained.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Observation in lessons by leaders and managers does not give enough consideration to the impact of teaching on students' learning.
- Not enough teaching provides consistently high levels of stretch and challenge in lessons, particularly, but not exclusively, for students with exceptional abilities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons where they observed teaching and scrutinised students' work. Eight lessons were observed jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors made brief visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, three members of the governing body, the joint interim headteachers, middle leaders, a group of parents and groups of staff.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents including the school's own self-evaluation, improvement plans, staff performance management records, and information about students' progress, standards, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 100 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also parent surveys conducted by the school over this academic year.
- Seventy five staff questionnaires were returned and considered by the inspection team.
- Two HMI visited the school on 11 September 2013 to gather additional evidence.

Inspection team

Sue Street, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joanna Beckford-Hall	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anna Ljumovic	Additional Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector
Heather Leatt	Additional Inspector
Chris Dowsett	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Nonsuch High School for Girls is a larger than average selective secondary school. It converted to academy status in June 2011. The predecessor school, which was known by the same name, was judged good overall when last inspected by Ofsted.
- The school is currently led by two acting headteachers who will revert to their substantive posts when the new headteacher arrives in September 2013.
- The school holds specialist status for science and languages.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is low compared to the national figure.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national average, as are the proportions who speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of students attending the school who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after, or those with a parent in the armed services) is much lower than the national average.
- The school does not currently make any alternative provision arrangements for students through other education providers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide consistently outstanding teaching throughout the school so that students make outstanding progress in lessons, by
 - ensuring that students are provided with learning activities that stretch and challenge students of all abilities, particularly those with exceptional abilities
 - revising the school's strategy for observing and assessing the quality of teaching, with much greater consideration given to the impact of teaching on students' learning and with closer reference to the Teachers' Standards.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students join the school having attained significantly above average results in their Year 6 tests. Standards at the end of Year 11 remain very high. In the past three years almost every student attained more than five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. In 2012, nearly nine out of every ten passes were at Grades A or A*.
- Achievement in lessons is good; this is amplified by work done outside the classroom including study at home.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress. The school is very effective in promoting equality of educational opportunity for all students, regardless of background.
- The achievement of students supported by the pupil premium is also outstanding. There is no difference between the standards achieved by these students and their peers. In addition to using the additional funding to support their academic needs, the money has been used to enable students to go on trips and participate in co-curricular activities.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is outstanding. The school is very good at assessing and supporting these students' learning.
- Students develop excellent literacy and numeracy skills that help them, for example, to be able to read difficult texts or draw graphs in different subjects independently and with increasing sophistication. The school has a very good strategy for the ongoing development and promotion of literacy skills across the curriculum. It is developing a similarly strong numeracy policy.
- Many students take the GCSE mathematics examination earlier than is normal. This does not have an adverse effect on their results, as almost all pass with an A* or A grade and then go on to study an additional mathematics qualification. However, the school has stopped entering students for an AS Level mathematics module before they start in the sixth form as this was not felt to be advantageous to their future learning.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. Students are very appreciative of the ways in which they are supported and challenged to achieve in the sixth form. Standards in the sixth form remain very high. Overall, this leads to outstanding attainment following from their outstanding results at GCSE. Many go on to university degrees including a number each year to Oxford and Cambridge, or to study medicine, veterinary science or dentistry. However, there is some variation between courses in the sixth form. For example, in 2012, A Level physics and fine art students did not achieve as well as in other subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's self-evaluation, parents and students all said that teaching is good, including in the sixth form. Inspectors agree. While some is outstanding, not enough is at the standard needed for teaching to be outstanding overall.
- Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge. Working relationships are good and teachers' praise engenders students' enthusiasm and keenness to do well. Planning is effective in ensuring that curriculum content and examination requirements are covered. However, less attention is paid to ensuring that students of all abilities are stretched and challenged in lessons. This is particularly so for the most exceptionally able, but is also the case for those who find some tasks difficult. Students and parents who spoke or wrote to inspectors suggested that, for some, outstanding examination success is helped by additional tutoring outside school and parental academic guidance that complements good classroom learning.

- Homework is set regularly and is taken seriously by staff and students. The school is quick to challenge when homework is not done to the required standard or is not submitted on time.
- Marking is good. It has been improved by the involvement of students in reviewing their own work alongside their teachers' comments. Students say that this allows them to develop their knowledge and understanding. Some outstanding assessment practice was observed by inspectors in students' books and through questioning in lessons, but this was not consistent across the school.
- The co-curricular programme is outstanding and complements classroom teaching very well. Opportunities such as music, sport, theatre and debating are attended by large numbers of students. The school has started to make better analysis of the participation of different groups in these activities, and new opportunities have been introduced such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- While agreeing that the school was a safe place for students, some parents and staff were discontented with the way that the school manages behaviour. However, all of the evidence seen by inspectors during the inspection and in the school's records over time showed that, overall, students' behaviour is outstanding. Incidents of behaviour requiring short-term exclusion are rare, isolated, and not repeated. Behaviour in lessons is frequently exemplary. Students are extremely keen to learn and make progress.
- The school's records suggest that bullying of any kind is unusual. Students report that racist or homophobic behaviour is extremely rare. They say that, if bullying did occur, they know who to seek help from and they believe that staff would deal with it quickly and effectively. Students themselves promote an inclusive community, for example through student-led support groups. The school has been proactive in raising issues of cyberbullying, including through social media.
- The school listens to the views of the girls well, including through a school counsellor and having senior students mentor younger students. This helps them feel valued and supported.
- Attendance is well above average. Instances of students missing more than half-a-day's schooling per week are extremely rare.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteachers and senior staff have worked effectively to maintain the school's high standards of attainment and behaviour over the past year. They have promoted continued high expectations and aspirations in all aspects of the school's work.
- Middle leaders have been given increased responsibility and involvement in observing teaching and learning. They told inspectors that current senior leaders have given a clearer vision for the development of better teaching. Clear systems are in place for regular classroom observations but leaders do not always understand about how to give high quality feedback to teachers. Nevertheless, teaching remains good rather than outstanding. This is for two reasons. First, too much emphasis is placed on the teacher's organization of lessons, rather than considering the impact of teaching on the quality of students' learning. Too few lesson observations give teachers detailed feedback about the quality of students' learning. Second, not enough consideration is given to the way that staff meet the Teachers' Standards (a set of expectations set out by the Department for Education in September 2012). These are also key reasons why leadership and management are not outstanding.
- Most staff and parents are supportive of the school's leadership and feel that the school is managed well. However, it was clear from the inspection questionnaires that a minority of those who responded were discontented with the way that the school was led, including by governors. Inspectors found that while lines of communication are clear and well-established, more could be done to engage staff and parents.

- The curriculum is developed well to meet students' high aspirations. Many told inspectors that they wanted to attend the school because of its science and languages specialisms, and because of more unusual subjects such as astronomy.
- The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs is excellent. A wide range of music, art and theatre visits covering diverse cultures, linked with robust religious education and personal, social and health education lessons support students' development very well. The trips and visits are followed up in school through allied subjects and clubs.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body serve the school loyally and bring a wide range of highly regarded expertise into the school. They understand the school well and hold leaders strongly to account. All this has helped them to support and challenge the school through a difficult leadership transition phase. They work well with the interim headteachers to develop middle leadership talent and uncover hidden potential.
 - The governing body ensures that teachers' pay is linked to the quality of teaching. However, more could be done to ensure that governors know if the Teachers' Standards are met. Governors could also do more to check that classroom observations give a greater focus to the impact of teaching on students' progress in lessons.
 - Members of the governing body expertly monitor the school's finances.
 - The governing body has ensured that all safeguarding and child-protection policies meet statutory requirements.
 - The governing body has monitored the relatively small funds given to the school for the Pupil Premium and has ensured that this information is available to parents through the school website.

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	136795
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	403681

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1224
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr. Antony Hyams-Parish
Headteacher	Tracey Hartley and Philip Sides
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8394 3400
Fax number	020 8340 3401
Email address	office@nonsuch.sutton.sch.uk

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