

# The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls

Queen's Drive, Acton, London, W3 0HW

**Inspection dates** 14–15 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Effective teaching, combined with a three-year Key Stage 4 programme of study and additional revision sessions, enables students to learn and achieve well.
- Students make good progress between Year 7 and Year 11 and the percentage of students gaining A\* and A and A\* to C GCSE grades have improved year on year.
- The achievement of students eligible for pupil premium funding is improving steadily. The proportion making expected progress in English and mathematics exceeded others in the school in 2013.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make expected progress in mathematics and more rapid progress in English. Those who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress.
- Students' behaviour is good in and out of lessons. Students feel very safe and enjoy coming to school. Attendance levels are high.
- The acting headteacher has very effectively shared her vision and ambition with all leaders and managers, who are improving teaching and raising students' achievement. She has motivated staff well. New staff appointments have increased the capacity of the leadership team to continue improving the school.
- The committed and informed governing body ably supports leaders and managers to improve teaching and students' achievement.
- The sixth form is good. Students' achievement in A-level courses improved in 2013, and those studying AS and vocational courses also achieve well. Almost all students move into employment, education or training.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching and students' achievement are not consistently good or outstanding in all subjects.
- Teachers do not always correct students' work and ensure students make improvements.
- Students' learning is not checked frequently enough during lessons. Teachers do not always ensure that the knowledge, understanding and skills of the most able students are developed.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 34 teachers in 35 lessons, of which 10 were jointly observed with senior staff. A series of shorter visits to lessons was completed with a member of the senior leadership team to observe students' learning and participation in the school's enrichment day (one of six whole-school days scheduled over the year as part of the curriculum to deliver personal, social, health, economic and enterprise education).
- Inspectors examined students' books across a range of subjects and year groups and discussed their work with them. They looked at students' examination results and evaluated the school's analysis of information about their progress. Inspectors looked at the records of behaviour, attendance, punctuality to school and safeguarding.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with students, and questionnaire returns from 35 staff were analysed. Inspectors took account of 72 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with the senior leaders including the consultant headteacher, middle leaders, staff and representatives from the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and records about the monitoring of teaching.

## Inspection team

Pamela Fearnley, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Duffy

Additional Inspector

Marcia Headon

Additional Inspector

Colin Mackinlay

Additional Inspector

Steven Smith

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost half of the students, higher than average, are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided in this school for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of students receiving extra support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is much higher than found nationally.
- The school has not been using any alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students by the end of Year 11.
- The governing body has appointed a number of interim senior leaders in temporary posts until September 2014. This is to sustain capacity in the senior team in the absence of a substantive headteacher. The team is composed of the current acting headteacher supported by a consultant headteacher, two acting deputy headteachers (one seconded from a local secondary school), three seconded assistant headteachers and three permanent assistant headteachers.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise students' achievement to outstanding by ensuring that:
  - the knowledge, understanding and skills of most able students are well developed in all lessons
  - teachers' skills in checking students' learning during lessons are developed further
  - students are quickly given guidance about how to improve their work so students are able to respond and improve their learning
  - subject leaders are more consistent in helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning within their specialist areas resulting in students' learning and progress being good and outstanding in all subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment which are broadly average. They then make good progress by the end of Year 11. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, increased in 2013 and is above the national average. The percentage of students gaining GCSE A\* and A grades and A\* to C grades has improved in recent years.
- Students' progress between Year 7 and Year 11 rapidly improved over the last three years and the overall proportion making and exceeding expected progress is above national figures. However, this positive picture is not as evident for the most able students who make similar progress as their peers nationally in English, mathematics and humanities.
- There remains some variation in the GCSE grades students gain in different subjects compared to national averages. In recent years the differences have reduced as the achievement of students has improved; but, in some subjects, such as geography, students' attainment is not as high as in others subjects.
- In 2013, disabled students and those who have special educational needs made better than expected progress from their starting points in English. They make expected progress in mathematics. Current information and inspection evidence indicate they are making better progress in mathematics because of additional support from a teacher assistant who is a mathematics specialist.
- Students who speak English as an additional language have made outstanding progress for the last three years. This is because their reading is well developed by targeted intensive one-to-one support. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds also achieve well.
- Students eligible for pupil premium funding made better progress in 2013 than before and the proportion making expected progress matched that of others in the school. However, the proportion of these students making more than expected progress remains lower than others in the school. Nonetheless, the gap is closing steadily year on year and work seen in students' books indicates this improving trend is being sustained because the school is more closely tracking the progress of these students.
- In 2013, the average GCSE grade for students eligible for pupil premium funding improved and was in line with that of other students in the school. The attainment gap between these students and others in GCSE English was reduced to approximately one third of a grade and just over half a grade in GCSE mathematics. This is a more positive picture than in 2012 and shows the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all.
- Year 7 students eligible for additional Year 7 catch-up funding are given intensive support by teaching assistants to improve their reading and understanding of mathematics. Since September 2013, they have made rapid progress; 93% improved their attainment in mathematics and 80% improved their attainment in reading to match the national average expected for Year 7 students.
- In 2013, 85% of the 20 students entered early for GCSE mathematics gained an A\*, A or B grade. However, the school no longer intends to enter students early for GCSE examinations. The school uses various whole school reading initiatives, which encourage students to read often and widely and students' literacy is developed well across the school.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students' achievement in A-level courses improved strongly in 2013 and their achievement in vocational subjects and AS courses was also good. Success rates improved, but variations in the progress of students across different subjects remain. The success of the school's drive to improve students' life chances is reflected in the greater proportion of students progressing to higher education.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is good, and in some cases outstanding. Nonetheless, not all teaching is at this level to ensure all students, especially the most able, make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects.
- In lessons where teaching is good or better, teachers have strong subject knowledge and are able to explain difficult points clearly. Relationships between students are respectful and they are willingly to offer explanations and support the learning of their peers, which help students to learn well and make good progress. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson analysing characters in the *Pied Piper*, the teacher developed students' subject knowledge and skills required to examine texts in detail. Teaching was swiftly adapted when students' learning slowed. This helped the students to learn well and make good progress.
- In some lessons, the most able students are given exactly the same work as others and find this too easy. This limits their knowledge, skills and understanding and hinders them from making more rapid progress because they are not challenged to think at a more demanding level than others in their class. Teachers also sometimes fail to check students' understanding during lessons. This means they are not always able to guarantee all students learn effectively.
- Teaching assistants use their specialist knowledge of literacy and numeracy to very good effect and this enhances the learning of disabled students and those with special educational needs. Similarly, students with poor literacy and numeracy skills develop their knowledge and achieve well.
- Students who are at the early stages of learning English receive rapid and intensive support to develop their literacy skills and so make outstanding progress by the end of Year 11.
- Homework is set frequently, but there is sometimes a delay between the time students complete their work and when it is marked by teachers. This limits the opportunity for teachers to quickly identify and correct students' misunderstandings and for students to make improvements so that they extend their learning and progress further.
- The three-year programme of study provides students with additional time to develop good literacy skills and prepare well for GCSE examinations. The combination of targeted support and intervention enables teaching to ensure students make good progress by the end of Year 11.
- Most sixth form teaching enables students to learn well and working relationships between teachers and students are good. Students feel able to ask questions and respond to teachers' questions and so effectively build on their knowledge and understanding and make good progress.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of students is good, both around the school and in lessons. Students are polite and helpful to visitors. Relationships between students and teachers are respectful in most lessons, but in the few cases where teaching is less strong, students' attitudes to learning are sometimes less positive.
- Students are eager to attend sporting activities beyond the school day and are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and physical well-being to support their academic learning. These aspects of school life are evidence of the impact of the school's work to develop students as rounded young people who are able to foster good relationships and learn well.
- Students say the way teachers manage behaviour has improved since the introduction of the 'Your Choice Plan' behavioural management system last term. This is reflected in the low numbers using the school's internal exclusion room.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students feel very safe and understand the risks associated with the internet. They are acutely aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and homophobic bullying. They are also clear about how to respond to safeguarding concerns because of the training they receive. Parents, carers and staff also agree students are safe at school.
- Attendance is high when compared to the national average. Students are usually punctual to

lessons, but some still fail to arrive at school on time. This is being tackled effectively by the school.

- Students in the sixth form have very positive attitudes to learning. They get on well together, show pride in their school and particularly value a shared sense of community. They are keen to achieve well and are also committed to the wider school community, for example by reading alongside younger students during lunchtimes to support them to read more widely.

## **The leadership and management are good**

- The acting headteacher is a very strong and committed leader who has a clear vision to improve the school. Her evaluation of the school's strengths and areas to develop is accurate and based on secure evidence. The actions identified in the school's improvement plan are realistic. She has refreshed the enthusiasm of leaders and staff by actively seeking their views about changes required for the school to improve further. The consultant headteacher effectively supports her and leaders at all levels to carry out their roles well.
- Leaders and governors are passionate about student achievement and have very high aspirations for students' well-being. Evidence of the impact of senior leaders' work in the short time the new senior team has been in place includes: the rapid improvement in students' behaviour; improvements in the school's procedures to safeguard students; the introduction of targeted tracking of students at risk of failing to achieve well; and improvements in the use and analysis of the impact of funding for students eligible for the pupil premium.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because, although the leadership of teaching is effective in improving the progress made by students, not enough teaching is outstanding and students' academic progress is not rapid and sustained in all subjects. In addition, it is too early to assess the impact of some more recent initiatives to improve students' learning and achievement.
- The local authority has been proactive in supporting the school to improve in the absence of a permanent headteacher, successfully ensuring that it continues to provide good leadership and management. Since September it has supported the school to review the quality of provision for students in Years 7, 11, and 13, and regular visits are made by the local authority's school improvement officer.
- Senior leaders track the progress made by students carefully. New systems to track students' achievement are in place, and the rigorous intervention systems used to support learning in Year 7 to Year 11 are becoming established in the sixth form. The new tracking systems are also allowing leaders to quickly identify teaching which needs further improvement and students at risk of failing to achieve their full potential.
- Subject leaders are aware of the strengths and improvements required in their areas. Nonetheless, their effectiveness in making improvements in teaching and students' achievement varies. Additional training and support are in place to continue to improve the leadership skills of subject leaders further.
- The acting headteacher has sharpened the rigour of the school's performance management process so teachers' annual performance targets are linked to three areas: the quality of their teaching; students' achievement; and teachers' contributions to the whole school community. This is helping leaders to support teachers' development and to make decisions about future pay awards.
- Improvement in students' achievement in mathematics, which was a key issue in the last inspection, together with the narrowing of the gap between the achievement of students eligible for pupil premium funding and their peers, is evidence of the school's record of improvement.
- The curriculum effectively provides an appropriate balance of academic and vocational subjects tailored to meet the needs and interests of all students. Plans are in place to increase the range of vocational courses in the sixth form to extend choices for sixth form students further.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are very well organised and meet the latest requirements.

■ Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development systematically and effectively, for example through lessons, assemblies and enrichment days.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The school benefits from a governing body that has knowledgeable long-term members. Governors share the leaders' passion for raising student achievement and ensuring students feel safe and happy at school. Governors challenge leaders, but are sometimes too accepting of leaders' views about aspects of the school's work. They are reviewing their effectiveness internally and so are becoming more aware of their training needs. They compare students' performance with other schools nationally and are aware that there is some variability in the quality of teaching and performance of some subjects. They have become more alert about the impact of pupil premium funding on students' performance. Governors show responsibility to improve staff performance by holding underperforming staff to account through rigorous performance management and rewarding good teachers. They complete the headteacher's performance management effectively and good financial management is in place. Safeguarding requirements are met and governors fully understand their importance. They visit the school regularly and consult parents and carers, for example through surveys and attending open evenings.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101941
<b>Local authority</b>	Ealing
<b>Inspection number</b>	428935

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,454
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	385
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Ballard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Kruger
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8752 1525
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