

# Highlands School

148 Worlds End Lane, Enfield, N21 1QQ

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- This is a high performing school where students make rapid progress and reach high standards across a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Students' high levels of achievement continue into the sixth form, with high standards attained in a range of subjects.
- Teaching is of a consistently high quality. Teachers have high expectations of their students. They use their enthusiasm and excellent subject knowledge to inspire students so that they can make rapid progress.
- Students attend well and are keen to learn and do their best. They are proud of their school. Students' behaviour is excellent and students feel safe at school.
- Students cooperate and take an active part in lessons which greatly benefits their learning. The school offers an excellent range of additional activities and educational visits.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students are thoroughly prepared to progress to higher education or employment.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and other senior leaders ensures that teaching is of consistently high quality.
- The leadership of subjects is very strong. Subject leaders contribute significantly to improvement and to ensuring that the highest standards are maintained.
- Governors know the school exceptionally well and provide effective challenge and support for the school. They are committed to its continued improvement.
- The well-planned curriculum enables students not only to develop academically but also to develop their creativity and confidence as they grow into mature individuals.
- The school works hard to recognise the achievement of staff and students so that all members of the school community feel valued.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons, including 15 carried out jointly with senior leaders. Further observations were undertaken with the headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator visiting a large number of other lessons to look at specific aspects of students' work and their attitudes to learning.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work, including an assembly and a number of tutor periods, and listened to students read. They spoke to students informally in lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes and observed students arriving at, and leaving, school.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including subject leaders and senior leaders, and five different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documentation including the self-evaluation form, the school development plan and records relating to students' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding and the minutes of the governing body were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the 207 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and letters and emails from parents. Several parents were spoken to on the telephone regarding the specific issues that they had raised. Inspectors also considered the 83 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Kevin Harrison, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Ivyrina Hoolas	Additional Inspector
Sandra Teacher	Additional Inspector
Sulina Piesse	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector
Steve Nelson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Highlands School is larger than the average secondary school. There are slightly more girls than boys at the school.
- Approximately half of the students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups; almost all of these students speak English as their first language.
- One in six students benefits from the pupil premium, which is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and those with a parent serving in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A specially-resourced provision supports eight hearing-impaired students who learn alongside other students in the main school. Additional support for these students is provided in small groups by specialist staff.
- Fewer than one in ten students receive catch-up support in Year 7 to improve their reading and mathematics to the standard expected at the end of primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Small numbers of students are taught away from the school at Enfield College and Capel Manor College.

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

- Make all marking as thorough as the best practice in the school by ensuring that all teachers:
  - provide written feedback which clearly explains how well students are doing and how they can improve their work
  - check that students respond appropriately to the feedback they receive.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is outstanding**

- Students make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of students who gain five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has been significantly higher than the national average for several years.
- In 2013, girls achieved slightly better than boys overall, and there were no significant differences in the achievement of students from different ethnic backgrounds.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to provide strong support to those students who previously underachieved. This is helping them to make rapid progress.
- The most-able students do well academically. Depending on their abilities and talents, they also thrive creatively and perform well at sport.
- Some students are entered early for GCSE mathematics and they make excellent progress. Early entry gives the brightest students time to study additional mathematics, which in turn encourages them to study mathematics in the sixth form, which many do.
- Disabled students and those with special education needs, including those enrolled in the hearing impaired unit, make strong progress because they are provided with very well targeted care, support and guidance. A parent commented that her son 'has been transformed since joining Highlands'.
- The 2013 GCSE results show that students supported by the pupil premium were over a grade behind other students in both English and mathematics. This gap was much wider than the previous year. The school's own tracking shows that the gap is narrowing again.
- Students acquire and confidently use a broad range of skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the full range of subjects.
- The small number of students who attend programmes at college achieve well, helped by the accurately-matched support and care they receive.
- High numbers of students stay on and join the sixth form where they continue to make rapid progress across a very wide range of subjects. Many students progress from the sixth form to higher education, including courses at some of the best regarded universities. Two students, one of whom was eligible for the pupil premium, have offers from Oxbridge this year. Students who choose to seek an apprenticeship or other employment are very well supported.

### The quality of teaching

**is outstanding**

- The evidence of the rapid progress made by students across a broad range of subjects and year groups, including the sixth form, and the high standards they reach, combined with observations during the inspection, confirm that teaching is of a consistently high quality.
- Students respond enthusiastically to the teaching. Many lessons involve a range of different activities that engage students by making learning fun. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher used and sung the tune from a pop song to help the students learn and memorise successfully a formula to calculate the circumference of a circle.
- Teachers have very high expectations of what each student can achieve. They know which students are eligible for pupil premium funding in their classes, and which ones have special educational needs, and they plan and teach to ensure that they all achieve their potential. Students with particular needs are well supported by the additional staff who work in strong partnership with teachers.
- Teachers' enthusiasm and their strong subject knowledge help them to inspire students and ensure they learn well. Teachers are skilled at adapting the work they set to students' abilities and interests and this helps them to make swift progress.
- Teachers perceive when students do not fully understand, and adapt their questioning or

method of working to ensure these students do not fall behind. Many teachers probe and challenge students further through follow-up questions, skilfully speeding up the rate of progress of the most-able students and providing additional support for those who are struggling.

- Teachers thoroughly track the progress of all students and targeted support is put into place for any student who is at risk of falling behind.
- In many lessons, students are encouraged to collaborate in groups or pairs. Students enjoy discussing their learning and sharing ideas whilst, in the process, developing their literacy and communication skills. For example, in a science lesson, students worked productively in groups to explore how ultrasound can be used to help people, for example in the scanning of women during pregnancy.
- Teachers generally give students detailed feedback. The best marking in the school helps students to improve their work, clearly informing them how well they are doing and how to make further improvements. However, this good practice is not yet universal and a few teachers do not check that students have acted upon the feedback and improved their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Students are well motivated, having positive attitudes to learning. They willingly participate in lessons and in a wide range of additional activities which helps their progress.
- Students know how to behave appropriately, whether or not they are being observed by an adult. They are polite in lessons and around the school.
- Strong, mutually-respectful relationships underpin all aspects of the school's work, and students' behaviour is consistently well managed by staff. Students and staff spoke of their pride in the school and staff morale is high. A staff member wrote I am extremely proud of our journey over the last five years.
- Many students take on additional responsibilities such as membership of the school council. Older students mentor and support younger students effectively, for example in paired reading and in clubs and sports.
- The school council is respected by both students and staff and helps to ensure that senior leaders take account of students' views and respond to any issues that are raised.
- The school's work to keep students safe is outstanding. Students have a clear understanding of risk, whether this be online or when participating in potentially dangerous activities, such as preparing food in the catering rooms or manufacturing their design work.
- Students mix well together regardless of their background. Bullying and racism occur very infrequently. Students know that both are unacceptable. Students said that any bullying is very swiftly and effectively dealt with.
- Attendance is above average and continues to rise. Meanwhile, the school is determined to reduce the already low number of fixed-term exclusions even further.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- All leaders and managers are fully focused on maintaining the highest possible standards within a culture of high expectations. Celebrating student achievement is central to the school and is manifest in the system of awards. Each department has a student of the week and students may also receive headteacher awards.
- The headteacher leads by example and is determined to improve the school. He is a National Leader of Education and the school welcomes and supports other schools.
- The extended senior leadership team is very effective and instrumental in ensuring that the progress of all groups of students is accurately tracked and analysed each half term. This enables any underachievement to be quickly attended to and contributes to the school's strong

promotion of equality of opportunity.

- The school's self-evaluation is sharp and accurate. Areas for improvement have taken full account of the issues raised by the previous inspection, all of which have been effectively resolved. This shows outstanding capacity for further improvement.
- Subject leaders share in the monitoring of teaching and impact positively on standards through this work and work with their line managers to develop their leadership skills.
- The sixth form is effectively led and managed. Appropriate data on students' progress are analysed in detail to ensure students do as well as possible.
- Teaching is accurately monitored and evaluated, with a focus on how teaching enables students to achieve. School leaders regularly visit lessons to maintain an accurate picture of teaching quality. Staff receive detailed feedback which celebrates the best practice and provides guidance for improvement. Any teacher observed not teaching at least good lessons receives an individually-tailored training and support package. Targets are set for teachers' performance against the Teachers' Standards and are linked closely to targets for improving students' progress. Staff share the best practice and learn from one another.
- Responses to the online Parent View survey show that parents are very pleased with how well their children are cared for and the progress they make at the school.
- The innovative curriculum, including the one-year GCSE courses from Year 9 onwards, enables students to study a broad range of subjects and achieve well. Sixth-form students also have a broad range of subjects to choose from. Students enjoy the range of clubs and trips offered by the school and value the detailed guidance they receive on their next steps, including on their choice of sixth-form courses.
- Staff and students are kept safe and safeguarding meets requirements.
- The school employs external support and guidance when appropriate and works in productive partnership with the local authority. Highlands is used by the local authority as a model of best practice to support other local schools.
- The school management offers innovative apprenticeship schemes to young people across a range of disciplines, including administration and behaviour support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governance of the school is outstanding. The governing body is highly effective and fulfils all its statutory duties. Governors use their wide-ranging skills to provide outstanding support and rigorous challenge. They clearly understand the school's performance information and how it compares to other schools nationally, this means they have a highly accurate understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.
  - The governing body has an excellent grasp of the school's financial arrangements, including the pupil premium funding. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent and evaluate the impact the additional resources are having on students' progress. There is now a governor with responsibility for pupil premium students.
  - Governors realise the importance of improving teaching and know how the system used in the school to do this links teachers' performance to pay progression.
  - The Chair of the Governing Body is a National Leader of Governance. He and other governors provide training and support for other local schools in partnership with the local authority.

## 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>	132256
<b>Local authority</b>	Enfield
<b>Inspection number</b>	441080

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<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
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,528
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	307
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Matthew Miller
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bruce Goddard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8370 1100
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