

The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls

Queen's Drive, Acton, London W3 0HW

Inspection dates

4–5 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors have continued to improve the achievement of all pupils. Pupils move to their next stage of education or training with very strong outcomes across a full range of subjects.
- The headteacher and her senior team have developed a strong and highly ambitious learning community. Leaders and staff work relentlessly to secure the school's vision for an inclusive and aspirational school.
- Leaders ensure that teachers receive the training they need to improve outcomes for all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad and balanced. They review and evaluate their planning continuously to ensure that it is aligned with their vision. This means that pupils develop a very real appreciation for a full range of subjects.
- Governors know their school well and are not complacent. A recent governance review identified ways to support and challenge leaders even further. Governors are highly ambitious for the school and its learners.
- Pupils from a range of starting points, including those who are disadvantaged or with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make excellent progress. Outcomes are outstanding because pupils benefit from high expectations and the deep subject knowledge of their leaders and teaching staff.
- Pupils make substantial progress across the curriculum. They have a love for learning and exceptionally positive attitudes to their work. Pupils are very well mannered and behave impeccably at all times.
- The culture of safeguarding is strong and effective. Pupils speak confidently, share their views and feel well cared for. This has helped to shape a welcoming and highly positive learning community.
- The sixth form is good. Students make clear progress from their starting points. However, progress is not as strong in the sixth form as it is in other year groups. Leaders have already begun to seek out ways to address this.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in the sixth form so that they are aligned with those across the rest of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and its learners. They have created a culture where pupils thrive and develop as confident young women. Leaders are reflective and seek out ways to evaluate their work and reshape practice, over time. Trainee teachers appreciate the support and guidance they receive, and become very effective practitioners.
- The leadership team is open about their evaluation of all aspects of their school, including their relentless ambitions to improve key areas, like the sixth form. Their ideas are well thought out and draw upon expertise that already exists within the school.
- High expectations for disadvantaged pupils have resulted in excellent outcomes for this group. The curriculum meets their needs well, and they thrive and participate readily in an inclusive, ambitious learning community. Governors have ensured that pupil premium funding is used effectively.
- Leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is strong. This is because leaders are well supported. They have developed effective ways to enable pupils' needs to be met, making use of specialist support and quality first teaching. As a result, pupils make very strong progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Staff enjoy working at the school. They speak positively about the support and training they receive. Teaching is highly effective. Subject leaders are a strong team, and are delegated responsibility and authority to improve the school further. They work well within their subject areas, as well as on school priorities. These leaders contribute well to the development of an outstanding school.
- Leaders strive to review their curriculum, evaluate it and decide which aspects to revise in light of national guidance and the needs of their girls. This has led to revisions in the way the curriculum builds learning across the key stages. Therefore, pupils benefit from a rich, broad and well-planned curriculum where teachers' depth of subject knowledge encourages learners to thrive.
- Leaders have created a culture where teachers discuss teaching and learning, and have opportunities to share successful practice. This means that leaders can begin to align standards in the sixth form with the rest of the school. Leaders have a local network to draw upon, and use links with schools and universities to further enrich their school.
- Across a wide range of subjects, pupils achieve outcomes above the national average, year on year. Pupils are supported in their transition to the school. Those who require additional literacy or numeracy support are given opportunities to catch up with their peers, and make excellent progress. The school provides group and individual support for any pupil requiring this type of intervention. As a result, they make strong progress.
- Leaders have improved communication with parents and carers since the previous inspection. They routinely consult parents and provide opportunities for them to visit and contribute to the school community.
- Pupils have developed a strong awareness of life in modern Britain, safeguarding and

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a result of highly effective pastoral care, which leaders ensure is at the heart of the school curriculum. Pupils and students in the sixth form were able to talk confidently about their roles in society and in their school community. Pupils spoken to commented, 'I just love going to this school; there's just so much to do; school's not just about academic subjects.' Others mentioned the extra-curricular opportunities and trips they had been on. Overall, pupils work well together and have a clear understanding of British values and why they are important.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed and ambitious for the future of the school. The recent review of governance was undertaken because of their desire to evolve as the school thrives. As a team, they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities.
- Governors have ensured that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve well and benefit from the pupil premium funding. Their scrutiny means that leaders are further refining ways that funds are allocated.
- Governors spoke in detail about the areas for improvement. This demonstrates that they are not complacent. Governors are relentless in their pursuit for even higher standards and greater consistency across all aspects of school life. They are in the process of restructuring governance and the roles of their committees.
- Governors provide scrutiny of exclusions and attendance. This has increased recently to challenge leaders to ensure that actions continue to have the impact required throughout the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils and students are aware of the risks they may face, and how to keep themselves safe. This is because leaders have developed an impressive and comprehensive programme focused on ensuring that their safety is paramount. Pupils said they feel safe in school, and are clear about the measures the school has taken to keep them safe.
- Leaders draw on external partners to meet the varying needs of their learners, including through links with universities and specialist support teams.
- Record-keeping is robust and effective. Leaders respond to pupils' needs in a timely manner to ensure their safety. Leaders check that staff receive relevant training and safeguarding updates. Those responsible for recruitment have appropriate training.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey stated that their children feel safe and happy in school.

- Teachers have a thorough understanding of their subjects and know their pupils well. This knowledge is used to explain concepts effectively and provide stretch and support for all. Teaching across the curriculum is routinely strong. This means that pupils engage enthusiastically with their learning.
- The range of activities teachers plan is well sequenced and matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers have high expectations of all groups of pupils.
- Pupils are passionate learners who have positive attitudes to learning. As they move through the school, pupils becoming increasingly adept at articulating and evaluating what they have learned. Pupils speak confidently, and explained how their teachers have helped them to improve.
- Teachers have developed effective ways to deepen pupils' thinking. They pose challenging questions for pupils to grapple with. This enables pupils to make connections in their learning and enhance their levels of understanding. This was seen in almost all lessons across the school. Pupils, including the most able, asked questions to clarify their thinking in response to what their teachers had asked. This demonstrated the impact of learning over time, and the strong progress pupils were able to make.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning because their teachers are passionate about their subjects. The positive relationships between staff and pupils create an environment where pupils feel well supported and want to learn. Some pupils commented that, 'Any teacher will just help you if you're not sure', 'They are just there for you, no matter what.'
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of subjects from which to choose as they move through the school. They are well prepared for their examinations, and are encouraged to enjoy creative subjects. Pupils take part in music and drama groups with enthusiasm, and develop an appreciation for the arts.
- Pupils take pride in their work. This is because teachers set high standards for presentation, and ensure that pupils adhere to these in all subjects. Pupils love reading and are clear about its importance in their development. Quite a few pupils commented that they encourage each other to read. For instance, a pupil explained that, 'If my friend didn't like to read, I would just find her books that she was interested in.' Another stated what others felt, 'Reading is so important; why wouldn't someone want to read?'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders provide a range of effective ways for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This contributes to a culturally diverse learning community where all groups feel a strong sense of belonging. Pupils' awareness of topical issues encourages them to develop as responsible citizens who are keen to take advantage of the opportunities the school offers them.

- Across the school, leaders have maintained a sharp focus on pupils' health and well-being, including their mental health. Leaders have brokered support from external agencies, as well as implementing innovative projects to help the girls remain mentally healthy. In the sixth form, students' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is carefully structured. It is planned around what leaders know and understand their young women need now and in the future.
- The highly effective careers information is impartial and well planned. It is personalised for each pupil so that they are ably supported to make the right choices. This support begins in key stage 3, and continues through to post-16 to ensure that all girls benefit from the advice given.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are confident about the way staff support them, and know they can rely on them, whether it be for social or academic guidance. Pupils thrive within the school community. They confidently assert that bullying is rare and, when it does happen, it is always dealt with.
- Some pupils attend alternative provision on a part-time or short-term basis. This provision is well suited to their needs, and they make strong progress. Leaders make every effort to ensure that these pupils achieve well and benefit from this additional support. Leaders are in regular contact with external providers, and keep track of how each individual is progressing.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are full of character, polite and well mannered. Their conduct is exemplary in lessons and during social times. They enjoy being at school and respect their learning environment by helping to keep it tidy.
- Leaders and teachers are motivated to maintain a highly inclusive school. All staff ensure that pupils attend well, and those at risk of exclusion or low attendance swiftly receive the support they need. As a result, vulnerable pupils continue their education and remain in education and employment.
- Rates of attendance are in line with the national average and continue to improve. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is closely monitored, and is improving in line with expectations.
- Leaders make use of internal exclusion, and have created a safe space for pupils to reflect, self-regulate and make better choices. This provision is monitored to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is within an environment where pupils have developed an awareness of the high expectations they have of themselves and each other.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Leaders have ensured that across the curriculum and in all year groups, pupils make

excellent progress. Progress has been strong and above national averages for the past three years. Pupils' outcomes across a wide range of subjects have been strong for some years, and continue to improve. In 2018, pupils in Year 11 reached higher standards in their GCSE examinations than school averages, locally and nationally.

- As a result of outstanding teaching, pupils from all groups and different starting points make substantial progress in almost all subjects, in each year group.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is strong; they make excellent progress during their time at the school. Teachers know pupils well, and use this information to plan learning to meet their needs over time, and at the point of learning. Leaders and teachers check pupils' standards regularly. They intervene swiftly to enable any pupil that begins to fall behind to catch up quickly.
- Pupils with SEND benefit from a high-quality provision which enables them to meet high expectations and achieve well academically and socially. Leaders use professional development opportunities to enable teachers to meet the needs of pupils with SEND through quality first teaching. Where necessary, specialist support is used effectively in the classroom and through small group sessions.
- Teachers challenge the most able to enable them to achieve well. However, leaders are aware that with further targeted support, these pupils could achieve more of the top grades. Pupils with low prior attainment make excellent progress in key stage 3. This helps them to catch up with their peers and access the full curriculum.
- Pupils are well prepared for their GCSE examinations, and develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need for their next stage of education. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading, and this continues as pupils move through the school.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Students in the sixth form make good progress from their different starting points. Most pupils follow academic courses where progress is in line with the national average. Leaders have recently introduced vocational courses to meet the needs of a wider range of learners.
- Leaders are clear about the strengths and areas for improvement across the sixth form. Sixth-form leaders are determined to ensure that standards are in line with those achieved in the rest of the school.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to support students and prepare them for their next stage of education and employment. Teachers foster positive working relationships with students, and engage them in a variety of activities to deepen their understanding. However, teaching is not always suited to the full range of learners. This means that, historically, progress has been variable.
- Attendance in the sixth form is improving. Students are diligent, hardworking and focused on how they can improve. They are positive role models for girls in Years 7 to 11.
- Leaders have designed an enrichment and careers guidance programme to benefit all students. Students welcome the opportunities they are given, and enjoy being part of

the sixth form.

- Those students who retake English and mathematics make strong progress. Teachers are ambitious, and enable them to secure the grades they need.
- Many students go on to higher education to study a wide range of courses, including engineering, medicine and mathematics. Students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, secure places at Russell Group universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. Students pursuing vocational courses and apprenticeships are well supported. The careers, information, advice and educational guidance (CIAEG) programme they receive is exceptional.
- Expectations of students across subjects are inconsistent. This means that some students do not routinely organise and present their work consistently well in all subjects. However, students who are well organised show that it supports their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	101941
Local authority	Ealing
Inspection number	10058842

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,297
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting chair	Christopher Pye
Headteacher	Rachel Kruger
Telephone number	0208 753 7853
Website	www.ellenwilkinson.ealing.sch.uk
Email address	head@ellenwilkinson.ealing.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2018

Information about this school

- The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls is an average-sized secondary school with a small sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and those whose first language is not English is much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Ealing Alternative Provision, Westside Academy, and Ealing Integrated Youth Service.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across a wide range of subjects, including an assembly and form-time sessions. Most visits to classrooms were conducted jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, and met with groups of pupils and students from key stage 3 and the sixth form. Inspectors spoke with other pupils and students informally throughout the inspection.
- Pupils' and students' work was scrutinised in lessons, and learning was discussed with leaders.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, middle and senior leaders and a local authority representative. Inspectors also met with teachers, pastoral leaders and the careers leader.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including evidence relating to safeguarding, attendance, improvement plans, school self-evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Parent View, including free-text responses, as well as pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

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