



Highgate Wood Secondary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102154
LEA Haringey LEA
Inspection number 276664
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Carmen Rodney HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Montenotte Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		N8 8RN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02083427970
Number on roll	1370	Fax number	0208342 7978
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Clive Menzies
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Pauline M Ashbee

Age group 11 to 19	Inspection dates 16 November 2005 - 17 November 2005	Inspection number 276664
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Highgate Wood Secondary School is a large comprehensive school with 1370 pupils including 170 in the sixth form. The school is located in Crouch End, a prosperous ward, but many of its wide ethnic groups of pupils come from the more deprived areas in Haringey. Over 30 per cent are entitled to a free school meal, 20 per cent have a special need and over one third speak a language other than English. It became a specialist performing arts school in 2002.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which helps pupils to realise that 'they are all of equal worth' and can achieve their potential regardless of their starting point. The very good leadership of the headteacher and an effective senior team has built a cohesive staff. Despite the difficulties with recruitment in some subjects, the headteacher has maintained a clear vision for improving provision for the students. There is a lack of complacency at all levels; the shared commitment of ensuring that all students achieve well is evident in the rigorous use of self-evaluation and data to monitor performance, set targets and address needs. Consequently, standards have risen each year since the last inspection and are in line with the national average, with good achievement. Good quality teaching is leading to most students achieving well. However, the challenge for the more able pupils, African, Caribbean, Turkish and those with learning difficulties is not yet consistent. The quality of care, guidance and support is excellent with good provision for personal development; but a small minority of disaffected pupils remain unsettled. Learning is greatly assisted by an effective curriculum. The school has successfully used its performing arts status to extend pupils' personal development and achievements in the arts. Parents support the school and all that it offers but a few are concerned about the truculent behaviour of a minority of pupils. The school has successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection. It provides good value for money and is very well placed to improve further in all respects.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence supports the school's evaluation of the effectiveness of the sixth form. It offers a good range of courses in partnership with a neighbouring girls' school. With good teaching, support and guidance, most students achieve well though achievement varies in each subject. Students contribute well to the life of the school by supporting younger pupils and helping the local community through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Resources and extra curricular activities are used well to meet their needs with students benefiting well from the good leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

* continue to raise achievement and standards for pupils of all levels of attainment, more specifically in science, design and technology, and ICT* ensure there is a consistent approach to planning for all pupils* work towards engaging the minority of pupils who are disaffected, unpunctual and not engaged in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students' achievement is good in the main school and also in the sixth form. Standards in the national tests in 2004 at the age of 14, and in the GCSE examination, are in line with the national average. The overall trend shows standards are improving. Standards in English are above those seen nationally; they are average in mathematics, but in science, they are much lower than the national average. The school is aware that results in science and design and technology are not as high as they should be. Effective strategies have recently been introduced to support students' learning in these subjects. Results in 2005 at GCSE level indicate that students do best in art and design, English, French, history and music. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Students make good progress overall from Year 7 to Year 11; however, it is better in Years 10 and 11. Students achieve well because most teaching is good and generally all are eager learners. The work set for a small number of more able students is too low a level. Some groups including those of Caribbean and Turkish descent do not always make the progress expected of them. The school is analysing this and working hard to ensure that all students do as well as they can.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The overwhelming majority of students enjoy coming to school and attend well. The school has taken effective measures to improve attendance; and as a result, it is above the national average. Students complimented the exceptional level of care. They feel safe and secure and know that the staff provide a high level of support and guidance. The school has introduced effective support systems to improve behaviour and reduce exclusions, and overall, students' behaviour is good. However, a small number do not always behave as well as they should. Students are increasingly involved in school life and are well prepared to take more responsibility for their learning with some trained as peer mentors to guide and help others. The school fosters the students' participation effectively and they know their views are valued. The scope of the school council is being increased to give students a stronger voice when decisions are deliberated. The school is successful in creating a climate where the spiritual, moral and social welfare of pupils is developed well. As a result, students are aware of the needs of others and show care and consideration to each other. Inspection evidence fully supports the school's self evaluation of personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's judgment that teaching and learning are good. Senior managers make accurate judgements when assessing lessons, and take appropriate action on the few occasions when teaching is not good enough. All teachers

are expected to explain to students what they will be learning in each lesson and help them understand how to improve their work. Most teachers assess students' work thoroughly, which helps both to know how well they are doing. The best learning takes place when lessons are well paced, stimulating and challenging. These lessons often have a range of activities and opportunities for students to learn in pairs, groups and as a whole class. Students know exactly what they are expected to do in these lessons; they are given clear guidance and helpful comments about how to improve. Learning in some lessons is outstanding. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, for example, students made excellent progress because they were actively involved and the expert use of the interactive white board supported their learning. Students enjoy the more active and stimulating lessons; work very hard and make good progress. A few teachers do not plan lessons well enough to ensure that all students, especially the more able, are given work that is hard enough. Occasionally some students arrive late to lessons without their books and teachers have to work hard to ensure they are involved and make the progress expected of them. Good teaching in the sixth form helps students achieve well in some individual subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Students in all key stages receive an appropriate curriculum that is enhanced by the school's specialist status. The Key Stage 4 curriculum includes an increasing range of vocational and academic courses with opportunities for work-related learning that, effectively prepares them for transition to the sixth form and the world of work. The school has used its specialist arts status to develop a deservedly strong reputation in the local community for high quality arts provision in music, public performances and PE. Extra-curricular activities are excellent and students spoken to genuinely appreciate these opportunities. The school increasingly reflects on, and uses available student monitoring data to develop curriculum opportunities that help ensure that needs of all students are being well met. However, there is still a recognised need to further target learning support for less able students based on accurate assessment of the data on their previous learning. The curriculum successfully promotes students' health, personal and social education as well as their understanding of ethical and cultural issues. The school recognises that it still needs to develop discrete time for studies in information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All students, including those who are most vulnerable, are very well cared for and their personal development and academic progress is well supported. Students have a clear understanding of their personal targets and what they need to do to improve their performances, based on clear advice and guidance. Students said they could talk freely to adults if they had any concerns and that they felt safe at all times. If there are incidents of bullying, they are quickly and effectively dealt with. This mirrors the excellent relationships observed between staff and students which effectively support

students' learning and progress. The school system of mentors and peer mentors was praised by students; they confirmed that their personal needs, whatever they are, are effectively supported. Systems for child protection are firmly established and effective. Students and parents agree that the school provides appropriate advice and guidance about subject choices before entering Year 10.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school; planning is clearly considered and some aspects are ground-breaking. Her vision for the pupils' education is captured in the school's value statement: 'every child is of equal worth'. The senior team shares and understands this vision which has been successfully conveyed to all staff. She has managed to create a sense of urgency for accelerating improvement in all areas of work. Together, the headteacher and senior managers are a cohesive and forceful team; they know what steps to take to secure improvement. Development planning is well articulated at all levels; line management and self-evaluation are used rigorously to monitor and evaluate performance, and, consultation with pupils as essential stakeholders is used to guide provision. A key factor in motivating staff to embrace the vision has been the exemplary use of self-evaluation, reviews, data and performance targets to improve teaching and learning. These have been important factors in developing the capacity of middle management to modify practice. The performance of different groups of pupils is analysed so that middle managers and all staff can gain a clear understanding of how to begin addressing potential under-achievement. Staff have been motivated by the introduction of some well founded projects for meeting the diverse needs of pupils. The governance of the school is good. Governors play a strategic role in monitoring the school's performance and are perceptive in their analysis of the school's provision. The governors are in a strong position to provide support and challenge for the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so welcoming to us when we inspected your school. Your comments are important to us and we welcomed the discussions with you.

Highgate Wood is a good school with many good features some of which are excellent. The school lives by its motto: 'every child is of equal worth' and most of you are proud to belong to the school community. Your headteacher provides very good leadership for your school. She has a clear vision to help all of you achieve your potential and this is shared by the senior managers and all staff. Almost all of you are achieving better results than expected based on your starting point when you entered the school. For example, many of you with low scores in Year 7 achieved level 5 by the end of Year 9. The Key Stage 3 results are particularly good in English and mathematics. The GCSE results are very close to the national average and this continued improvement is seen in the sixth form.

The quality of teaching is good and is contributing to many of you doing well. We realise that you learn well when the teachers use interactive and stimulating approaches. The level of care, guidance and support that is given is outstanding. You are kept well informed about your targets. The curriculum provides a range of courses notably in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The school has used its specialist arts status to help many of you develop your artistic talents. Most of you respond very well to all the school offers but a few do not behave as well as expected. This sometimes slows the pace of your learning and others. There are a few things that we would like your school to work on to help you achieve your best. These include: * ensuring all of you realise your potential in every subject but more specifically in science, design and technology and ICT* ensuring that lessons are well planned to reflect the ability of every student* working towards engaging the small number of you who are often late to lessons, disaffected and not engaged in your learning. The school has improved very well in recent years and has a clear dream for its future development. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney HMI

Lead inspector