

Lady Margaret School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100364
Local Authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	285780
Inspection date	14 February 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Lynes HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	594
6th form	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Waterhouse
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Whyte
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	Parson's Green London SW6 4UN
Telephone number	020 7736 7138
Fax number	020 7384 2553

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Inspectors met with a range of staff and students. Lesson observations were carried out with members of the school's senior leadership team. Discussions with governors and 400 questionnaire responses from parents further assisted the writing of this report.

Description of the school

Lady Margaret is a smaller than average, very popular school. It reserves 50 out of 90 places for practising members of the Church of England. A relatively small proportion of students are eligible for free school meals, about 80% are of White British origin, and less than 10% speak English as an additional language (EAL). The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is about the national average. Students start school with higher average levels of attainment than those found nationally.

The previous inspection in 2001 stated that the school was 'very effective in all aspects of its work' and had 'many outstanding features'. It has been a Specialist College in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) since 2003. The new headteacher had been in post for one and a half terms at the time of this inspection, following the retirement of the long serving headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lady Margaret is a good school with some outstanding features; in particular the exceptional capacity of the recently formed senior leadership team (SLT). They have very quickly established an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The standards achieved in examinations are high throughout the school. The personal development of students is also outstanding; particularly those in the sixth form who develop into lively, confident young people who are well prepared for their futures. This is significant because almost all students who start in Year 7 continue on into the sixth form. The SLT recognises that it needs to take the views of students into account more often, particularly in Years 7 to 11.

Students attain high standards and make good progress. The school is not yet outstanding because not all students consistently make very good progress. There is some variability between subjects, particularly in the sixth form, and between year groups. Teachers have detailed, informal knowledge about students' progress, but the school recognises that it does not yet systematically monitor their progress across all subjects. It is therefore vulnerable to the relative underachievement of some, particularly those of average ability. There is evidence of good practice in humanities and science, and senior leaders are taking active steps to share this practice across the school.

The curriculum is good but aspects of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme require strengthening. The school works very well with outside agencies to promote the well-being of students. Specialist status has improved both the provision and use of resources, such as laptops and electronic whiteboards. It has yet to make an impact on standards in ICT and achievement in mathematics.

The school is very well placed to capitalise on its existing strengths to achieve its ambition to become outstanding. There is a real commitment from staff to do their very best for the students. Their success is seen in terms of the very good care that students receive, their personal development and high examination standards. The SLT and the governing body recognise and are fully committed to tackling the areas for improvement identified in this report.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is good. The school offers a wide range of academic courses which meet the needs of most students. Staying on rates are excellent: about 85% from Year 11 go into the sixth form, and 100% stay on from Year 12 into Year 13. Sixth formers are excellent role models for younger students and are keen to take on the many responsibilities offered to them, such as organising assemblies, mentoring younger students and supporting the local homeless organisation. They successfully revived the school house systems. This is encouraging friendly competition in sports and events such as the 'spelling bee'. Students achieve high standards but there is variation in their achievement between different subjects. Significant number of students gain places at high ranking universities. Partnership with local schools is supporting the personal development of students but this is not yet exploited to offer a wider range of vocational courses.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that students views are listened to and used to inform decision making in the school, particularly in Years 7 to 11
- ensure students have access to an effective PSHE programme
- make better use of information on student performance to set more challenging targets for their achievement

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter the school with standards that are well above average. They attain high standards in examinations at both Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the sixth form. Considering their starting points this is good achievement. It is not exceptional because some middle ability students only make satisfactory progress. More able students make very good improvement.

Students with LDD make outstanding progress because of the very good targeted support provided for them. Achievement in mathematics and science by the end of Year 9 is not as good as in English, which is exceptional. There is significant variation in achievement between subjects in the sixth form: from satisfactory to outstanding. The school does meet its targets for examination results. Data provided by the school show that students are currently making good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development is good from Years 7 to 11 and outstanding in the sixth form. Girls really flourish and grow in confidence in the sixth form, where they demonstrate real initiative both in and outside the classroom. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is a result of the very good religious studies programme, which continues into the sixth form, and the spiritual ethos of the school which promotes strong moral and social values. The students benefit from a strong sense of community and are very supportive of one another. Their behaviour and attendance are excellent. They develop very good skills and personal attributes that will prepare them well for their future.

The school is fully aware that it needs to do more to listen to and act upon the views of students in Years 7 to 11. The views of sixth formers are actively sought and taken into account when making decisions. There is more to be done to improve the impact of curriculum devoted to developing healthy lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The senior leadership team judges teaching and learning to be good and evidence from inspection, including the views of students, confirms this. Very good attitudes, relationships

and behaviour ensure that there is an excellent culture for learning both in and outside classrooms. There are outstanding lessons where teachers skilfully use questions to develop understanding and higher order thinking skills. There is also some satisfactory teaching where lessons become pedestrian affairs that do not sufficiently challenge or engage students. These less successful lessons are characterised by being teacher led, and sometimes offer limited opportunities for students to develop independent learning. Teaching assistants are used well to ensure that more able students and those with LDD make very good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. It provides a broad range of academic subjects which generally match the needs and interests of most students. There is good provision for those students who need more support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. There is a wide range of enrichment activities provided outside the school day which students really value. The curriculum provides exceptionally good routes for those wishing to go on to higher education. Those students who want to pursue a vocational route into work or further education are given good advice at the end of Year 11. The school is aware that it will need to develop the curriculum in the light of the local 14-19 agenda and the new system of diploma qualifications currently being developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding because teachers and support staff really know their students as individuals. As a consequence they develop their personal qualities and make good progress towards their academic targets. They receive very good guidance and support in attaining places at university. A wide range of mental and emotional health issues are dealt with sensitively and very effectively. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are securely in place. Most students know their targets and how to improve their work. Systems to track academic progress are good, but the school is aware that it could do more to ensure that they have consistent impact.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management, particularly that of the senior team, is outstanding. They ensure that the school runs very smoothly on a day to day basis. At the time of inspection they had been in place for a term and a half. They have used this time to establish a highly developed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. None of the issues for improvement that this inspection highlighted were a surprise to them, and plans are already being drawn up to address them. They are sensitive to the fact that Lady Margaret is already a successful school, but know that there is more to be done to ensure that it is an outstanding one.

The senior team is actively enabling middle leaders to take more responsibility and holding them to greater account. For example, middle leaders are now tracking student performance in a more systematic way that will have a greater impact on achievement. The professional development of middle leaders has been prioritised. This demonstrates the outstanding capacity at all levels of leadership and management to improve.

Governors have a realistic, accurate view of the school. Finances are managed particularly well. They have worked hard to secure the appointment of an exceptional headteacher and a very able deputy. They know that they need training to ensure they are equipped to challenge the school on aspects of students' academic performance.

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Annex A

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
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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?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
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	1	1
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	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
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	1
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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know I and one other inspector came to inspect your school recently. Thank you so much for your contribution to the inspection. We really enjoyed meeting some of you, and wanted to thank you for your openness and the honesty with which you expressed your views.

We agree with you that Lady Margaret is a good school. You achieve very good examination results, but not all of you make outstanding progress. Sixth formers in particular have access to a wide range of activities and develop exceptional personal skills. You feel that you do not get enough information on issues relating to sexual health, drugs education or mental and emotional well-being. You told us that you feel safe and enjoy most of your lessons. Sometimes you find that lessons are not as engaging or challenging as you would like. You very clearly told us that you would like more say in what goes on in the school; to have your views heard and respected.

After listening to your views, examining the data, observing lessons and talking to your teachers we have asked the school to make the following improvements:

- develop the personal, social and health education aspects of the curriculum.
- make better use of information on your academic performance to set more challenging targets so that you achieve even more.
- ensure that your views are listened to and used to inform decision making in the school, particularly in Years 7 to 11.

It might interest you to know that your headteacher had already told us before the inspection that these were areas that she felt the school could improve upon. This is part of the reason we have judged the headteacher and her senior team as having outstanding capacity to make these improvements. I am sure that with your hard work and the continued support of your parents the school will go from strength to strength.

With very best wishes

Michael Lynes
Her Majesty's Inspector