

Hendon School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101357
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	286042
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Richard Marsden

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1253
6th form	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr A Isaacs
Headteacher	Mr K McKellar
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Golders Rise Hendon London NW4 2HP
Telephone number	020 8202 9004
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a mixed comprehensive school serving the culturally diverse, multi-faith and multi-lingual community of Hendon. The social make-up of the intake is average and attainment on entry is average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average. Proportions of students from minority ethnic groups are higher than average. English is not the first language for more than half the students. The present headteacher has been in post since September 2006.

The school is heavily over-subscribed. It is a Specialist Language College and makes special provision for deaf students.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school has overcome many challenges and now provides a good quality of education for its students. Under the energetic leadership of the recently appointed headteacher, very good self-evaluation has enabled senior leaders to focus on the key priorities systematically. The outcome of this rigorous work has been rapid improvement. This high quality teamwork has galvanized the staff and brought out the best in them. Students' pride in their school has consequently been restored. Parents are full of praise for the strides the school has made.

The school's Specialist Language College status makes a profound impact. Students are learning a wide range of languages and there are strong international links with Europe and further afield. Students are exceptionally well prepared for their roles as global citizens.

Creative and innovative approaches to solving problems have been developed. This is particularly evident in the wide range of strategies to manage behaviour. As a result, behaviour in lessons is very good. Students are willing and keen to learn, and appear to enjoy their lessons very much indeed. The influence of the students chosen as 'Leaders in Learning' has been exemplary. Students develop very good workplace skills such as group working, communication, and risk-taking. Careful attention is paid to students' safety. Any issues are acted upon swiftly and effectively. Since the last inspection the learning environment has improved markedly.

Standards are average and, taken overall, students' achievement is now satisfactory. However, this does not give the complete picture in this rapidly improving school. Teaching has improved significantly and is now good. Systems are in place to ensure that students' progress is monitored and students are now making good progress in lessons. Results in national tests show an upward trend at Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 they were below average in 2006, although students are well on course to meet challenging targets in 2007. The legacy of under-achievement has yet to be completely eradicated for older students, however. It is still evident in the unevenness in performance between subjects. Teachers make effective use of information from assessments in some lessons to set challenging work, and this has contributed to the acceleration in students' progress. In some classes marking and the setting of homework ensure that students and their parents know what they need to do to improve. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across all subjects.

The improvements in Key Stages 3 and 4 have yet to be felt in the sixth form, where provision is still only satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is achievement.

The recent, rapid improvements, and the insightful evaluation of senior leaders, point to a good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory, although the number of one-year vocational courses is limited.

Standards at AS and A level are below national averages but above average for vocational courses. Students' achievement is satisfactory. There is evidence of improving progress but this is not yet reflected in examination results. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In order to raise standards, the school is encouraging students to take more responsibility for their own learning and play a more active part in lessons.

Students' personal development is good. They have excellent opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and serve as positive role models for younger students. They provide reading and learning support in class, or help with coaching and mentoring. Some hold responsibilities as prefects or are members of the active Student Parliament. They develop strong leadership and team-working skills as a consequence.

Students speak warmly of the good care, guidance and support they receive. One commented that the sixth form is 'a community in which everyone encourages each other to work hard'. Tutors are beginning to monitor progress more effectively and set targets to help students improve, though this work is under-developed. Most students complete their chosen courses. Increasing numbers of students are progressing into higher education.

The recent improvements in students' progress, which have been felt in the main school, have yet to make an impact in the sixth form. Leadership and management are therefore only judged only satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- Ensure that assessment is used more consistently to remove unevenness in the performance of different subjects at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that leadership and management in the sixth form focuses more closely on the achievement and progress of all students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Overall, achievement is satisfactory and standards are average but improving. Students achieve well in Key Stage 3. Standards in Year 9 have remained above average since the last inspection and have improved faster than those found nationally, particularly in mathematics and science. This is because of good teaching and improved monitoring of students.

Whilst standards in Key Stage 4 were just above the national average in 2005, they fell in 2006. Students did not achieve as well as they should. The percentage of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grade C and above, including English and mathematics, compares more favourably with national results than does the figure for those attaining five without these. This indicates the importance of these subjects to the school's overall GCSE achievement in 2006. Recent strong improvements in progress are indicated by the school's very detailed tracking data. This information, along with grades already attained by current Year 10 and 11 students in their GCSE modules and work seen in lessons, shows that the achievement of these students is now satisfactory, and they are attaining average standards. A significant factor in this upturn is way in which the tracking data is used to identify under-performing students. They are energetically mentored and supported as they work towards specific targets.

Results in Years 9 and 11 since the last inspection indicate no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of students in this socially and culturally diverse setting. The school's good provision has enabled notable progress to be made by the deaf students

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is exceptionally well developed. They have an especially good appreciation of different cultures and faiths, work very well with each other, and enjoy their education greatly. The 'zero tolerance' policy on bad behaviour means that inspectors saw no disruption in lessons. Students say the school provides a very safe and peaceful environment. Effective policies on bullying and racism ensure that any incidents are effectively dealt with. Students have a good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles; they choose healthy foods in the school canteen and take advantage of the wide range of sports activities offered.

Students contribute exceptionally well to their community. The 'Leaders in Learning', for example, are excellent role models to their peers. They take responsibility, amongst other things, for monitoring the quality of teaching. The students' voice is effectively heard in the School Parliament. They have assisted in the appointment of teaching staff, and suggested improvements to the school environment, such as a new water feature. Several students serve others effectively as 'peer counsellors'. The preparation for students' future economic well-being is good. All students undertake a week's work experience in Year 11, and gain key communication and team skills in 'industry and enterprise days'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. Inspectors confirm the school's own evaluation of the quality of lessons. In most lessons observed in Key Stage 3 students made good progress. In all lessons observed in Key Stage 4 students made good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. A strong drive to improve teaching is having an impact on standards and achievement. Classroom relationships are good. Consequently, lessons get off to an effective start. Lesson planning and delivery are not consistent, however, and some parents have expressed concern about unevenness in the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers' use of assessment to help students to improve is inconsistently developed across subjects. It is best in modern foreign languages and humanities. Most teachers have high expectations, and the needs of different groups are generally well catered for, but in a minority of lessons activities do not take account of the full range of needs and abilities. Homework is sometimes used well to reinforce learning, but this, also, is not consistent in all subjects. The school has appointed 'Leaders in Learning' - students who make a highly valued contribution by serving as role models for their peers. As a result, the climate for learning is rapidly improving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is good. It is greatly enriched by the Language College specialism. There is a strong international dimension in the range of overseas visits and partnerships. All pupils study two languages at Key Stage 3 and these are delivered in an innovative way.

As a result of a recent review, students in Year 10 may combine vocational and academic courses. Partnerships with local colleges and other schools enable the school to offer a range of vocational courses. While the impact on standards has yet to be seen, there is evidence that these changes are increasing motivation.

Students with learning difficulties receive very good support. The celebration of cultural diversity is a major strength of the school.

Learning is enriched by a wide range of activities outside lessons. Students have opportunities to develop a good understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles. Their confidence, team working and problem-solving skills are greatly enhanced by residential trips, including adventurous activities for all in Year 9. There is good provision for work related learning: all students complete work experience in Years 11 and 12.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school provides good care, support and guidance for every student. Teachers show a high level of commitment to students, and both students and parents praise the school's support systems. Guidance and support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. Health and safety procedures are clear, and child protection procedures are robust. Students know where to turn for help if needed. They make good use of the 'Telling Box' system to raise their concerns. Support for vulnerable students, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for deaf students is outstanding, enabling them to progress very well. They take a full part in the life of the school. The inclusion centre provides very good support for students at risk of disaffection. Tracking systems are beginning to help raise standards although their impact still has some way to go. The school monitors students' progress and gives well-structured support to those who are identified as at risk of underachieving. Students are well informed about their choice of courses and careers. The school provides a good level of support and guidance for sixth form students helping them to prepare them successfully for the world of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school's leadership and management are good, and have significantly improved since the appointment of a dynamic new headteacher who, with his newly formed team, provides outstanding leadership. A Year 10 student comments, 'He has breathed new life into the school.' His inspirational methods have already led to greatly improved progress in lessons. Managers

at all levels share a clear vision for improvement, although in the sixth form this is not sufficiently clearly focused on raising standards and improving achievement. The governors have a clear understanding of the school, and are not afraid to offer critical challenge. Communication between the school and parents has been greatly improved, and parents feel happy to approach the school. Since staff feel very well supported and esteemed, their morale is high following some years of decline. The school uses penetrating self-assessment, as well as students' results to identify areas where teachers need to sharpen their own skills. Consequently, ongoing staff development is very well focused. New strategies, including a well-conceived behaviour policy, have had a strong impact. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced, and staffing is more settled after recent instability. Resources are used well, although some lessons take place in poor accommodation. The school manages its finances well and provides good value for money.

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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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?	1	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
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	1	
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	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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?	2	3
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	2	
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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Hendon School, London, NW4 2HP

It was a great pleasure to meet you during our recent visit to your school. Your inspectors found your openness and friendliness very helpful. You made a strong impression as you talked to us about the recent improvements to your school and we decided, after observing lessons, looking at your work, and talking to your teachers, that your school provides you with a good quality of education. You can be proud of it!

We were very impressed with your behaviour in and around school. You have good relationships with your teachers. You listen to them and cooperate very well with them and with each other. This helps you to learn effectively.

We saw some good and some outstanding lessons. Your teachers work very hard to make sure that their lessons are as good as they can possibly be. They are seeking to make improvements all the time. Some lessons are better than others though, particularly when it comes to homework and marking. We have asked teachers to make sure that variations are evened out so that standards continue to rise, particularly at Key Stage 4. Progress is not as good in the sixth form as elsewhere in the school and we have asked your teachers to make this a focus for improvement.

You make a very good contribution to the community. We feel your school is preparing you well for the world of work and for your responsibilities as global citizens.

Thank you, again, for all the help you gave us during the inspection.

With very best wishes,

Richard Marsden Lead inspector