



Isleworth and Syon School for Boys

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102541
Local Authority Hounslow
Inspection number 286417
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Stephen Long HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Ridgeway Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Isleworth
Age range of pupils	11–18		TW7 5LJ
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	020 8568 5791
Number on roll (school)	1005	Fax number	020 8568 1939
Number on roll (6th form)	176		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Vanessa Smith
		Headteacher	Mr Euan Ferguson
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	22–23 November 2006	286417

© 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Isleworth and Syon is slightly larger than most secondary schools. It serves an area with some pockets of social deprivation and a greater than average proportion of students are entitled to free school meals. The school has specialist status for sport, an Investors in People award, a Silver Artsmark and Healthy Schools status. A higher than average proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups and have home languages other than English. The proportion with additional learning needs, including those with a statement of special educational need, is average. A small number of girls join the school roll for the sixth form. Another group of girls, from other schools which are part of a consortium arrangement, attend some sixth form classes; this group currently numbers 34. Staff recruitment reflects the local picture in being difficult to some subjects.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Isleworth and Syon is a satisfactory and improving school with a number of good features. It offers an inclusive education and is a popular choice for local parents. The school's specialist status has made a good impact on the curriculum and students' personal development, and a satisfactory impact on standards. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average overall. Students join the school with average attainment and make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, achievement was average up to 2003 but fell for the next two years. However, the 2006 results were markedly better and students are on target to sustain the improvement. Nevertheless, there is variation in achievement between some subject areas in Years 10 and 11.

Leadership and management are good. The school made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection, such as improving the learning environment and ensuring statutory curriculum requirements were met. In response to the falling standards in Years 10 and 11, the headteacher reorganised the senior leadership team, making new appointments and bringing about improvement by addressing weaknesses in teaching, the curriculum and leadership at all levels. There is good capacity to go further. Monitoring and evaluation give the school a good understanding of what still needs to be improved, although the governors do not make enough use of assessment data to check students' achievement.

Care, guidance and support for students are well managed and of a good standard. Students' needs are well known to staff, and their personal development and well-being are good. Most students' behaviour is good; they enjoy school and treat each other with respect. The curriculum is good with outstanding provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly related to sport, and for work related learning. These opportunities provide valuable support to students in leading healthy lives and developing the skills necessary for their future economic well-being. Links with the local community are strong, for example through the sixth form consortium, work with businesses to provide enterprise training and sports-related connections with local clubs and primary schools.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some examples of good and outstanding practice. Improvements in planning and in the quality of activities provided have hastened achievement at GCSE level. However, the strengths now evident in teaching and learning are not consistent across the school; some lessons do not challenge and involve all students enough and some incidences of poor behaviour in lessons are not well managed so as to avoid disruptions to learning.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision for sixth form students is good. Effective leadership, coupled with strengths in care and guidance, ensures that their personal development is good. Students become increasingly independent and well motivated as they move through the sixth

form. They make a positive contribution to the life of the school, for example providing sports coaching for younger students and acting as appropriate role models. Academic progress has improved in recent years and is good overall because of the good teaching offered. Students speak well of the curriculum and other opportunities provided, saying their needs are well met and they feel well prepared for employment or the next phase of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistently good achievement between subjects in Years 10 and 11.
- Improve teaching and learning by making sure all students are fully challenged and engaged in lessons and by improving some teachers' behaviour management skills.
- Develop the governors' capacity to independently challenge the school over students' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Between Years 7 and 9, students make satisfactory progress so that standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average by the end of the key stage. In the 2006 national tests, English results were slightly lower than the challenging target set by the school. Effective analysis has identified the reasons for this, such as weaker reading skills, and appropriate steps are being taken to remedy the situation.

In Years 10 and 11 students make satisfactory progress and reach average standards. After a decline in the proportions of students gaining 5 or more GCSE grades at A*-C in 2004 and 2005, the results rose sharply in 2006. This was the result of improvements in teaching and in using assessment data to track students' progress and tackle underachievement. There were particular gains in modern foreign languages, and more high grades were achieved in history and mathematics. However, design and technology remains the weakest area.

In Year 12, students make satisfactory overall progress and meet their targets. However, in Year 13, progress improves; it is outstanding in most A2 courses because teaching is consistently strong and because students apply themselves well to their studies during this year. Standards are above average by the end of year 13.

In all years, students with additional learning needs, including those with English as an additional language, achieve as well as others. Achievement by different ethnic groups is broadly similar although students of Indian heritage make the most progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Most students enjoy school, attend well and are keen to participate in sporting and other after-school clubs. The vast majority have positive attitudes to learning. They develop good levels of confidence alongside good moral and social awareness. As a result, bullying and racism in the school are infrequent. Most students treat each other, and their teachers, with respect. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall. However, a small minority of students exhibit challenging behaviour, are less engaged in lessons and are sometimes disruptive. Students' spiritual and cultural development is good because of well planned assemblies, curriculum provision such as in religious education and through a broad range of visits, including to museums and places of worship.

Students feel safe in school and are conscious of the need to behave safely. They understand the importance of healthy life-styles because of curriculum activities and the healthy school and specialist sport status. Students make a good contribution to their community, typified by the school council's involvement in healthy choices being offered in cafeteria meals. Their contribution to the wider community is also good, for example through charitable fundraising. Older students take on a wide range of responsibilities including sports coaching for younger students. They develop good skills and knowledge for the world of work from a well-planned work-related curriculum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

During the last two years there has been a clear focus in the school on improving the quality of teaching and learning. It is consistently good and often outstanding in the sixth form. Systematic procedures for monitoring teaching and learning have resulted in a clear consensus among teachers about what constitutes effective teaching and learning. Many have developed new skills leading to the better achievement seen in Years 10 to 13.

The majority of lessons are well planned so that learning builds progressively. Most teachers set effective short term targets for lessons and provide a satisfactory range of activities. Resources, such as interactive whiteboards, are often used imaginatively to present ideas and give lessons a clear purpose. The students appreciate the increasing number of more interesting lessons, saying they enjoy the interactive and 'friendly learning' which goes on. However in some lessons, activities do not challenge all students, are insufficiently varied to sustain students' interest and do not involve them enough. This leads to some poor behaviour which is not always well managed.

Systems to track and monitor students with additional learning needs, including those with English as an additional language, are good and the school works successfully with other agencies to support them. However, teaching is not always focused sharply enough on their needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

In Years 7 to 9 the curriculum is broad and balanced with opportunities for studying two modern foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11, there is a good range of compulsory and optional courses which meet students' needs well. Sixth form students benefit from an extensive range of subjects available through the consortium arrangements. A good personal, social and health education programme promotes safe and healthy living well. Provision for work-related learning is outstanding and there is good provision for enterprise and citizenship. There are good procedures to identify gifted and talented students. Subsequent provision is satisfactory but the school is taking appropriate steps to develop it further. Literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology are used satisfactorily across the curriculum but are not consistently developed through teaching and learning in all subjects.

Curriculum developments linked with the specialist sports status contribute well to provision for physical education (PE). All students study PE and gain related qualifications in Years 10 and 11. These developments have sharply increased the school's links with the wider community, for example older students help organise activities in local primary schools. There is an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities, including for sport, after school and on Saturdays.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The staff know students' individual needs well and are committed to meeting them. The majority of students are confident that appropriate support will be provided if they have a problem related to their work or other issues. Child protection systems are secure and there is appropriate attention to health and safety procedures. The majority of students are well supported in behaving appropriately and making a valid contribution to the life of the school. While the permanent exclusion of students is very rare, the incidence of fixed term exclusions, involving a small number of students, has been high. This is being addressed by the school and these students are being supported more effectively in managing their behaviour.

Systems for monitoring students' progress and setting targets are good. Underachievement by individual students is routinely identified. Students know their targets well and report that 'Teachers care a lot about how you do' and that they are easy to talk to. Some marking and feedback from teachers is of a high standard, providing good guidance for improvement; however, this is not universal and some

students are unclear as to how to reach their targets. There are very good procedures and a good range of information for students when curriculum and career choices are made.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher provides clear direction and is very well supported by other senior staff. They effectively share and develop their vision with the staff as a whole. This, coupled with effective staff training, has revitalised the school. Teaching has improved, achievement is rising and personal development is good. Difficulties in recruiting teachers for some subjects remain but are well managed. Middle managers, such as subject leaders, offer good leadership overall although there are inconsistencies in their capacity to direct improvements. Recent developments in the structure of pastoral support, for example the institution of a house system, are well considered as a means to link the monitoring of academic and personal development. Although the learning environment has improved, shortcomings, such as a scarcity of sixth form study space, remain.

The school's accurate monitoring and evaluation is based on a wide range of evidence. The conclusions are used well to set priorities for whole-school improvement. Within individual subjects, monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning are effective and are leading to improvement. Nevertheless, the analysis of the achievement of different groups of students is not routinely deep enough and some priorities for action in individual subject development plans lack detail.

Governance is satisfactory. The governors are committed to the school and very involved in some areas, for example work to improve behaviour. They receive a good range of information from the school about the progress being made overall but do not independently challenge it enough over students' academic progress.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	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?	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.

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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	3
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

Thank you for your help and participation during the school's recent inspection. This letter is a summary of what we found out.

- The school is satisfactory but improving and has strengths in some areas.
- You make as much progress as is expected for your ages, except in the sixth form where you do better than other students of your age.
- The headteacher leads the school well and is well supported by the other staff.
- Behaviour is good. Most of you said you enjoy school, that there is little bullying and that it is well managed by the staff. The school is working hard to improve the behaviour of the few students who don't behave well.
- Most of you try to lead healthy lives by eating well and taking plenty of exercise. The school's sport status helps with this.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving. You told us you enjoy the lessons where there are an interesting range of activities. However there are some lessons which do not involve you enough or where the poor behaviour of some students is not dealt with properly. Teaching is especially good in the sixth form.
- The school tracks your progress well. Most of you know what your learning targets are although not always how to achieve them.
- The school provides a good curriculum, including an excellent range of sports activities and opportunities to learn about the world of work.
- You make a good contribution to the life of the school and the community outside, for example by getting involved in the student council and charity fund raising.

In order to improve things the school should

- Support those of you doing GCSEs in gaining equally good grades in all subjects.
- Make sure all lessons are interesting, involve you fully and that the poor behaviour of some students does not disrupt their own and other students' learning.
- Ensure that the governors check carefully how much progress students make.

Thank you again and I wish you the very best for your future.

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools