

Holland Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100501
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	307409
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Kennedy HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1371
6th form	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sir John Baker
Headteacher	Mr Colin Hall
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Airlie Gardens Campden Hill Road London W8 7AF
Telephone number	020 7908 1000
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Holland Park is a larger than average, over-subscribed comprehensive school serving an area where the proportion of those eligible for free school meals is well above average. Students are drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and the largest groups are those of White British, Black African and Moroccan heritages. About 10 % of students are refugees, mostly from Somalia and eastern Europe. Almost 50% of the students speak a home language other than English; very few are at an early stage of fluency. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or and those that have a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average. The proportion of students joining and leaving the school other than at the expected times is higher than in most schools nationally.

The school holds the following quality marks: Artsmark, Healthy Schools, Sportsmark, Investors in People and Financial Management Standard in Schools. The school has recently obtained specialist status for humanities with English as its lead subject. The school operates extended and community learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holland Park is a good school, with an exceptional learning culture among many other outstanding features. 'The school is going from strength to strength. I'm very proud to be part of Holland Park's progression'. Comments like this from the vast majority of parents who wrote to inspectors are a clear indication of how well the school has progressed since its last inspection.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding in their clear vision, drive and focus on making the school the best it can be. They have created an exceptional ethos where staff and students aim for excellence, learning is enjoyed and individuals are supported and valued. The staff provide every student, regardless of ability or background, with exemplary care, guidance and support. As a result their personal development and well-being is outstanding and they thrive in a safe and stimulating learning environment. Students are proud of their school and are powerful ambassadors for it. This truly inclusive school celebrates the achievements of all, which can be seen, for example, on the mounted photographs and certificates enhancing an outstanding learning environment.

Test results have shown a marked and rapidly improving trend year on year in standards, with Holland Park being included among the top performing schools nationally based on sustained improvements in 2006. Results in 2007 show that this steep upward trend is continuing. This excellent achievement is a direct result of the highly effective leadership and dynamic management at the heart of the school, and the priority it has given to improving the students' learning environment and the quality of teaching. Learning is promoted through the stimulating and excellent curriculum, strengthened by the humanities specialism. Leaders know their school well and have rightly identified that in order for standards and achievement to continue to rise they need to develop and share more exemplary practice in teaching and learning so that students of all abilities have excellent learning experiences. Current achievements, sound systems and the strong commitment from staff and students alike, indicate that the school's ambitious targets for 2008 and beyond are realistic and achievable. The seismic and sustained improvements since the last inspection place the school in a strong position to continue its impressive development.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The good sixth form has a successful focus on raising achievement. Many staff contribute to the effective leadership and management building on established strengths. Standards are in line with national averages and students make good progress. Leaders in the sixth form are not complacent: they have strategies in place to improve achievement in identified subjects, strengthen the vocational dimension, and monitor more closely and track the progress of students in lessons. Teaching and learning is good. Teachers inspire confidence through their expert subject knowledge, resulting in enthusiastic and increasingly more sharply focused learning. Students' personal development and well-being are excellent. They are very positive, mature and confident and have many opportunities to exercise leadership. They value their treatment as adults and feel very much part of a leadership team. They mentor younger students and make an outstanding contribution to the school community. They take assemblies, give presentations to the whole school and facilitate after-school activities. The good curriculum provides opportunities for the majority who wish to follow academic courses. Collaborative partnerships are being developed to increase the range of courses available and better meet

the interests and abilities of the growing number of students. The very wide programme of enrichment activities meets the needs of students very well. The excellent care, guidance and support enjoyed by students in the main school continue in the sixth form through the strong pastoral programme.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the capacity of all staff to provide outstanding learning experiences for students of all abilities.
- Raise standards of achievement and improve curriculum provision in the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter the school with standards that are now above the national average; this has risen over the past few years, when they were below. The number of students reaching national expectations in tests at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE has increased significantly, particularly in the last three years and this upward trend is being sustained. Standards are above the national average at the end of Year 9 and improving. The number of students achieving five or more GCSE A* to C and, for example in English and mathematics, is now above the national average and also improving rapidly. The school has successfully addressed the variability in progress across different subjects and this is reflected in greater consistency in results for 2007. Good progress is evident in the sixth form with students achieving standards broadly in line with the national average.

Achievement, which had been satisfactory between Years 7 to 9, is improving and progress by the time students reach the end of year 11 is significantly above average. The school's strong systems for care, guidance and support enable staff to quickly identify students who are at risk of not achieving as well as they could. As a result, all students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is not a first language, make good progress. Students do so well because of the good teaching, an excellent curriculum, their own outstanding attitudes to learning and very effective tracking and monitoring of progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' excellent personal development and well-being can be seen in the respect they show for their wonderful learning environment and the harmonious relationships they have with each other and with the staff. Students are proud of their school; they feel valued and appreciate the superb opportunities it provides for them. Respect for all within a very diverse, rich and welcoming community is a striking feature of the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, and is enhanced for example, by thought provoking assemblies. Students greatly enjoy their school and this is reflected in their good attendance that has improved year on year. Punctuality is generally good although some instances of students arriving late to lessons impacts on the effective use of teaching time. Students generally behave well in and around the school. A swift and firm response from staff to incidents enables them to feel safe. Through arenas such as the school council, students make a significant input to the many of the decisions taken within Holland Park. For instance, they helped design and

choose the style of the recently updated school uniform which they wear with pride. The school displays the many names of those whose outstanding attitude, achievement and contribution is celebrated in its annual 'Perfect Tense' event. The nutritious selection of food available in the canteen, including the free breakfasts on offer to all, is a key component of the healthy lifestyle adopted by the school community. Students participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities. The range of workplace skills on offer and the sound guidance and direction they are given, prepares students well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Good and improving teaching and learning is a key to the success of the school. Meticulous preparation for lessons, sound subject knowledge and consistent classroom management are strong features of the teaching. Clear explanations at the start of lessons ensure students know what they will be learning. Students are keen to learn and this shows itself in their good work-rate. They are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and the improved quality of marking helps them with this. Students are given opportunities to peer assess, and mark and display exemplary work. In most lessons, this means that students make good strides in their learning. In some lessons, satisfactory teaching does not match work sufficiently well to learners' needs and there are missed opportunities to extend learning through the effective use of questioning. The school has rightly given priority to further developing teaching and learning so that a greater proportion is good or outstanding.

Teachers are experienced in using very good resources, such as interactive whiteboards to best effect. A learning ethos permeates the school with its outstanding learning environment, inspirational texts and images in classrooms and corridors. These have a palpable impact on students' engagement and enthusiasm. Students and a significant proportion of parents commented on the very high quality of teaching, exemplified by one parent who wrote that, 'the school is studded with high calibre teaching staff'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The excellent curriculum is a reflection of the school's commitment to making learning meaningful and enriching for all. Its quality, balance and the range of vocational and academic courses on offer motivate students well. These are also developing well in the sixth form. Underpinning the personalised curriculum is a good knowledge of students' diverse needs, strengths and aspirations.

Cross-curricular links are good. For instance, in history aspects of the Holocaust are taught alongside the religious education focus on Judaism. Students are given the opportunity to visit Auschwitz to consolidate their learning and enhance their spiritual and moral development. A particular strength is the development of pathways to match the courses on offer in Years 10 and 11 with those on offer in the sixth form. Exemplary provision for students with little or no English, and those who arrive late into Key Stage 4 or the sixth form enables them to gain accreditation and follow pathways into academic or vocational education.

The school's specialist humanities status has been used well to increase time and resources for subjects such as English and history. These are now considerable strengths in the school, playing a significant role in the enrichment of the whole curriculum. The school, for example, encourages the development of speaking and listening skills across all subjects, led by a dynamic English department. Provision for the teaching of personal, social and health education is excellent. As part of the extended school provision there is an extensive and exciting range of extra curricular activities with exceptionally high participation rates.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support both academically and pastorally for its students, enabling them to make exceptional strides in their personal development. Staff have a sound knowledge of learners and their diverse needs. Regular, thorough tracking identifies those who may be falling behind and personalised support is quickly put into place. Study support, through its extended school provision and the residential courses provided for students contribute to the outstanding support on offer. As a result, all groups achieve well. This is captured by a parent's comment about the support her child received when she was ill: 'the care and attention was amazing and the school ensured that her learning was disrupted as little as possible'.

A very well-resourced learning support centre provides targeted support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enabling them to achieve well. Similarly, the behaviour support centre is effective in supporting students with challenging behaviour. Students joining the school with English as an additional language (EAL) make very good progress because of the EAL provision. The multi-disciplinary Student Needs Team effectively coordinates the identification, tracking and support provided to vulnerable students, enabling many of these learners to move on to further and higher education. The school places high priority on inclusion, ensuring for example, that they make extra educational experiences and trips available to all regardless of their ability to pay.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Many parents wrote in praise of the school's exceptional leadership and management and inspectors agree. The headteacher's leadership is charismatic, inspirational and transformational and is enhanced by the powerful and complementary skills of the associate headteacher. An excellent leadership team and strong leaders at every level ably support them. Although modest, at times, self-evaluation has enabled them to have clarity about strengths and areas for development, and they have ensured, with relentless determination, that the school moves from strength to strength. Leaders recognise the importance of modelling excellent teaching at all levels and have developed support systems to enable staff to share good practice. This includes, for instance, peer mentoring and the sharing of exemplar work in the staff bulletin. Excellent performance management is closely aligned to teaching and learning and teachers have individual portfolios to track their development. Leaders address inconsistencies quickly through highly effective monitoring systems. Resources are managed well and staff are well

supported through personalised training and individualised plans. Managers nurture and develop the capacity of new staff to enable them very quickly to develop leadership and teaching skills of a high quality. The exemplary governing body is striking in its clarity of purpose and strategic vision and rightly sets challenging but realistic targets, which have driven the impressive pace of school improvement. The leadership team has established Holland Park as a flourishing and strong contributor to the local community. Parents and neighbouring primary schools regard the school highly for the impact it has had on students' achievements.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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 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	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

19 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Holland Park School, London, W8 7AF

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited you. This letter summarises the findings of our inspection. If you want to read the complete report you can download it from www.ofsted.gov.uk.

We enjoyed meeting you and were impressed with the contributions you make to the school, such as the new uniform you helped design. Your attitudes to learning and the wonderful displays of your work are impressive. You are right to be proud of your school. You said you enjoy school and this can be seen in your good attendance and behaviour. Your headteacher and other senior teachers ensure that the school provides you with a very good education. The care and support of staff can be seen in your outstanding personal development and the good progress you make. You told us that your school has improved and that lessons are much better now and we could see that in the few we visited. Your teachers work hard to do the best for you and are very keen to make learning even better. You can help by making sure that all of you are on time for your lessons.

The school's curriculum is very good because it provides you with opportunities to do well and to have a wide range of activities outside of lessons. We enjoyed listening to your musicians as they performed in the foyer. We also enjoyed the free healthy breakfast that is available to you and the staff! Your test results have been improving and we are confident that this trend will continue. One of your parents wrote that 'the school must be doing something right - our children are happy and enthusiastic to learn!' We agree! To make your school even better we have asked senior leaders to:

- help teachers to become even better at what they do so that more of your learning experiences will be outstanding
- make the sixth form better by raising standards and improving the curriculum.

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We wish you success for the future.

With very best wishes,

John Kennedy

Her Majesty's Inspector