

Queens Park Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101560
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	307737
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Cathie Munt HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1214
Sixth form	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Beard
Headteacher	Mr Mike Hulme
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	Aylestone Avenue London NW6 7BQ
Telephone number	020 8438 1700
Fax number	020 8459 1895

Age group	11–19
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Inspection number	307737

© Crown copyright 2008

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

This larger than average size school is regularly oversubscribed. Over three quarters of the students are from minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are of Asian or Asian British heritage and black or black British Caribbean heritage. Around twenty percent is from a range of white backgrounds. Although the proportion of students whose first language is not English is very high, only a few are at the early stages of learning English. In each year group, there are more boys than girls. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, has increased since the previous inspection. Then, the figures were broadly in line with the national average, now they are much higher than in most schools. Most of the students in this group experience behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, a few have moderate learning difficulties and several are dyslexic, have difficulties in speech and language, are autistic or have physical impairments. The proportion entitled to free school meals has increased slightly and is well above the national average. A substantial number of students enter and leave during the school year and many of the late entrants have gaps in their formal schooling. Some of these students are refugees or asylum seekers. The local authority funds a tailored curriculum for 24, potentially high attaining, students who are new to the United Kingdom. Many community groups use the school's facilities on a regular basis. Sixth form students travel to other schools for certain subjects. The sixth form is part of the South Brent consortium with three other local schools. The school has achieved Business and Enterprise Specialist Status in 2003 and became a Creative Partnership core school in 2006. It retains its Healthy Schools status, originally awarded in 2003. A City Learning Centre is on site and a purpose built Children's Centre is nearing completion.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Queens Park Community School provides students with a good education that prepares them well for the future, and particularly for their entry into the world of work. The school utilises its specialist status most effectively to raise standards and enrich the curriculum. It successfully helps students achieve effective business and enterprise skills through exceptionally well-developed links with local business and industry and partnerships with other educational establishments. A wide range of curricular, extra-curricular and business/enterprise opportunities promotes community cohesion extremely effectively. Attainment on entry to the school, although broadly average, reflects a wide range of ability. Student mobility is fairly high. Many joining after the start of Year 7 are in the early stages of acquiring English and some have had disrupted or limited formal education. This affects their level of attainment and increases the proportion working at lower levels in some year groups. Teachers make a sterling effort to ensure that no student leaves the school without a recognised academic qualification. Consequently, standards are average and students generally make good progress in relation to their starting points because of good teaching, effective care, guidance and support and students' positive attitude to their work. However, in the very small number of lessons where teaching is poor and behaviour management weak, students become bored or disaffected and make too little progress. A number of imaginative strategies identify and support underachieving students, for example, single-gender classes, mentoring, after-school workshops and Saturday booster classes. These sessions are well attended and accelerate learning, helping most students to reach and sometimes exceed their personal targets. As part of the school's inclusive policy, the sixth form recruits all students who are considered to be capable of succeeding in their chosen courses. Consequently, the entry requirements for some courses are lower than average. Standards in the well-managed sixth form are average because of effective teaching and efficient tracking of work levels and attendance. This represents good progress.

The school community successfully celebrates its multi-ethnicity and students say that they get on well together. This is a consequence of effective personal development and well-being and good spiritual, moral social and cultural development. An excellent and multifaceted curriculum engages students' interest and meets their needs exceptionally well. Behaviour is good in most lessons, although movement between sessions can be a little boisterous. However, students feel safe in school and are confident that, although bullying has reduced and occurs occasionally, it will be effectively dealt with by the school. Attendance has improved due to vigilant monitoring and is now above that of similar schools nationally.

Under the quietly effective leadership of the headteacher, the senior leaders, staff and governors have addressed issues from the last inspection and have focussed successfully on raising standards. The school has improved the use of data to track progress but reports are sometimes too wordy and not sufficiently analytical. While there is room to improve results further, steady improvement in the progress of students, together with the positive impact that the school's specialist status has had on extending the curriculum and supporting community cohesion, are evidence of a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students achieve well, many from below average levels when they enter the Sixth Form. By the end of Year 13, standards at A level and in vocational courses are average. Consequently,

progress is good. This is due to good teaching and to students knowing their targets and taking responsibility for their own learning. Students contribute very well to the life of the school and wider community showing good leadership and initiative. They help in local primary schools, raise funds for charity, show consideration for younger students through the 'Sixth Sense' caring scheme and have created a superb garden in memory of a teacher who died. Attendance is satisfactory in Year 12 and good in Year 13. Students adopt healthy lifestyles and safe practices.

Teaching is good. The best lessons are lively and promote independent enquiry. A few lessons are too teacher directed; teachers do not always ask searching questions that encourage students to extend their thinking. Students are generally eager to learn and participate well. Good use of computers and interactive whiteboards enhances learning. An excellent range of courses, with a good balance of vocational and academic subjects, is provided through the consortium.

The majority of students are taught on the school's own site, with good enhancement through the courses offered in the South Brent Schools' Partnership. Inspectors looking at the four schools in the sixth form consortium concluded that sharing courses with three local schools provides a wide range of options and a good balance of vocational and academic subjects. However, the sixth form consortium lacks strategic direction.

There is good provision for students' wide range of needs. They are well informed about potential grades, based on previous examination results, and they know how to improve their work in order to achieve them. Students receive good advice about careers and entrance to higher education. The Sixth Form is well led and managed, with good tracking of progress and attendance. A wide range of curricular, extra-curricular and business and enterprise opportunities promote community cohesion extremely effectively. Staff are deployed well and the sixth form provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good in all lessons.
- Refine the use of data, increasing the level of analysis.
- Take steps to improve the strategic management of the sixth-form consortium.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly average, representing satisfactory achievement for most students including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Assessment data for 2008 reflect an improvement in English, mathematics and science results from the previous year. Differences in the attainment of boys and girls have narrowed, although at the higher levels in mathematics, boys' performance is still noticeably better than that of girls, and in English, this pattern is reversed. Students who speak English as an additional language attain better than this group does nationally because of the good support that they receive. There is no significant difference in the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

In Year 11, the proportion gaining 5 A* to C grades is around the national average. All students gained at least one pass at GCSE in 2007, demonstrating the high level of inclusion within the school and the relevant curriculum students follow. Unconfirmed results for 2008 show a marked improvement from the previous year. Observations during the inspection confirm that standards are continuing to rise and the school's data show that achievement is good. Improvements in teaching and increasingly effective monitoring of the students' work mean that the majority

of students, including those identified as being particularly at risk of disaffection or exclusion, are making accelerated progress in many lessons and over time. Overall, girls achieve better than boys do. The school has responded positively to the issue quickly and effectively, establishing single sex teaching groups and implementing strategies and resources to engage boys' interest. Vulnerable students, for example, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well, owing to the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral social and cultural and development are good as reflected in the inclusive relationships and atmosphere of trust and mutual respect that prevail. Polite, welcoming students enjoy school, valuing its racial and cultural diversity. One student said, 'The school is a family. I feel comfortable here.' Students appreciate their teachers and say that 'dedicated' staff 'give up their spare time for us'. Most feel safe in school and are aware of how to maintain a healthy and safe lifestyle. They know who to speak to if they have a problem and are confident to do so. Most showed great maturity when discussing cyber bullying in a very successful personal, health and social education session. Students welcome these sessions, saying that the topics discussed help them, as one stated, 'not to make a complete mess' of their lives.

Behaviour is good in most lessons, although movement between sessions can be a little boisterous. Parents rightly noted that in the few instances where teaching is weak, student behaviour deteriorates, preventing effective learning. Permanent exclusions have declined; fixed-term exclusions remain constant. Effective systems help to reintegrate excluded students from this and other Brent schools.

Students respond positively to the school's commitment to healthy eating and extra curricular activities. They enjoy the canteen's healthy food and the myriad extra- curricular activities are well attended. Students are active in the community, working in local primary schools and on projects such as the local carnival, the African Caribbean project, and the Green Team. Preparation for economic well-being is good due to the variety of enterprise experiences within the curriculum and working with the business community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with outstanding features in some subjects. Warm relationships between teachers and students provide a relaxed learning environment in which respect for the individual is evident. Teaching assistants provide strong support for students with particular learning needs. Systems to improve learning through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching by senior staff are bearing fruit. Teachers are aware of students' capabilities and most plan lessons that provide appropriate challenge. Many lessons move at a brisk pace and are characterised by vibrant teaching and the innovative use of interactive whiteboards. Students are clear about what they are expected to learn. Improved marking has ensured that students are receiving good guidance about how to improve their work and move on to the next stages of their learning. This good practice does not yet extend to all teachers. A few lessons are poorly managed resulting in ineffective independent work practices and insufficient opportunities for students to evaluate their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Queens Park Community School reviews its outstanding curriculum frequently to ensure that it meets the needs of its students. Due to its specialist status, it has become a focus for good practice in information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, business studies and enterprise. These skills have a high profile across the subjects enriching curriculum provision. A remarkable inventory of outside contacts facilitates numerous enterprise related projects ranging from school and community based activities to foreign travel. Able students can study two modern foreign languages throughout both key stages. In Key Stage 4, an excellent choice of academic and vocational courses matches students' abilities, interests and talents well. Some of these are provided through partnerships with other institutions. A comprehensive programme of work-related learning and work experience, strongly underpinned by the prominence of enterprise skills, prepares students well for future employment. Very productive use is made of time during lunch breaks and after school to provide greater flexibility and choice. The curriculum is well supported and enhanced by an exceptional offer of additional activities. These cover an extensive range of interests although drama and music are particularly popular. The senior jazz band recently played at a festival in Taiwan.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care, guidance and support enable students to feel safe and to make good progress in their learning and personal development. Child protection procedures are secure, health and safety issues are fully addressed, and risk assessments attended to carefully. Considerable effort is made to help students attend school. The consistent implementation of effective strategies, such as phoning parents rather than sending home formulaic letters and providing targeted support for vulnerable students and their families from a pastoral manager, has increased the rate of attendance by over three per cent over the past year. Students feel safe and know what to do if bullying occurs. The school has good systems to collect data about students' progress. A huge amount of data is shared electronically and the school, rightly, is working to simplify its use. The data available provides teachers with a clear picture of how well students are doing and helps staff to set challenging targets, as well as identifying any student requiring additional support. However, departmental evaluations vary in quality and there is scope to develop a more analytical approach.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the leadership of the extremely well thought of headteacher this school has positioned itself at the hub of its community. Students thrive and community cohesion, exemplified by the strength of its myriad partnerships and the exceptional valuing of diversity shown by students, is outstanding. Leadership and management at senior levels are effective and promote improvement. Early indications are that challenging targets set for 2008 have been exceeded. Staff and governors work together effectively to promote the well-being of students and to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated. All levels of management show a passionate commitment to inclusion and some of the school's most successful work has been with students excluded from other establishments. A culture of honest

and ongoing self-evaluation is evident and is a prime reason for the range of improvements noted. Information and communication technology is now promoted well across the curriculum and is used extensively by staff to collect and collate data. Well-targeted training is enabling all managers to develop the skills needed to use data more effectively. However, some reports are too verbose and not sufficiently analytical. Parents and students praise the school's pastoral care highly, but a number of parents, rightly, were critical of some lessons where teaching did not meet the needs of mixed classes effectively. The school accepts that they need to do more to help parents to understand the school's homework practices. Governors, under the astute leadership of the chair, have an extensive strategic overview and a commanding understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their support serves the school well.

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.

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
---	-----------------------	--------------

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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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/or disabilities make progress	2	

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

27 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Queens Park Community School, London, NW6 7BQ

I am writing to let you know our findings following the recent inspection of your school. Thank you for sharing your thoughts so articulately. The school is certainly a hub within the local community and it works most effectively with many different groups to provide the right education for each of you.

Our main conclusion is that Queens Park Community School is a good school where you do well. Improvements have been made since the last inspection and some areas are outstanding. These include the excellent curriculum, the way that the school treats everyone equally and the way that everyone is so involved in the life of the school, the local and world communities. Almost all of you make good progress because of good teaching that is well monitored. You know how well you are achieving in lessons and how to improve because teachers keep you well informed. A wide range of academic and vocational courses prepare you well for future life.

There is good support for students with English as an additional language and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Sixth form students progress well and make an effective contribution to the life of the school. The effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Your school is well led and managed. In order to improve even further we have asked the school to:

- ensure that teaching is consistently good in all lessons
- refine the use of data, increasing the level of analysis
- take steps to improve the strategic management of the sixth-form consortium.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Cathie Munt

Her Majesty's Inspector