

Brentside High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101939
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	307858
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham 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	1234
6th form	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Catherine Smith
Headteacher	Mr Arwel Jones
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Greenford Avenue Hanwell London W7 1JJ
Telephone number	020 8575 9162
Fax number	020 8833 2110

Age group	11-19
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Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

Brentside High School is a larger than average, mixed comprehensive school serving a culturally and socially diverse community in Ealing. Over three quarters of the students are from minority ethnic groups. Refugees and asylum seekers make up nearly one sixth of the school population. There is very high student mobility as a significant number of students join and leave the school throughout the year. The proportions of students with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are higher than the national average. The school has had visual arts specialist status since 2001. The school has gained Artsmark Gold, Chartermark, Secured by Design and International Schools awards and is a member of the Specialist Schools and Academies Most Improved Schools Club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Brentside is a good school. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen rapidly and the school is now oversubscribed. It provides an inclusive education where all children are supported and encouraged to do as well as they can in all aspects of their development. A parent reflected the views of many parents and students by commenting, 'We are very pleased with the approachable and friendly school culture and the harmony that exists among a wide range of racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds'

Students begin school with levels of attainment that are below average. Standards are rising and are close to average at Key Stages 3 and 4. Examination results at GCSE in 2007, including passes in English and mathematics at GCSE grade C and above, were the highest ever. Students make good progress overall relative to their starting points with no groups of students performing less well than their peer group. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, those with English as an additional language and the significant number of students who join at times other than the usual time of admission achieve well throughout their time in the school. This is due to the very effective intervention and support they receive.

Students' personal development and spiritual, moral and cultural development are good because of the broad curriculum and high quality care and support they receive. Students enjoy coming to school and feel very secure and comfortable with each other and with their teachers. The school deals with any anti-social behaviour rapidly, including any bullying or racist incidents. Students attend school very regularly and behave well. Many participate in a wide-ranging programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities and understand the importance of being healthy and keeping fit. The programme of citizenship and personal social and health education enables students to understand their rights and responsibilities and use them to contribute to decision making in the school. The school's specialist status as a visual arts college has enriched the curriculum by expanding the range of arts courses for students and establishing extensive community links. This has a positive impact on standards and on students' social and cultural development.

Teaching and learning are good overall. The strong relationships between students and teachers and between the students themselves create a positive learning environment. The quality of learning varies. Achievement is improving in subjects where teachers take account of assessment information about students' progress to plan lessons and mark work with sufficient detail to inform them clearly how to improve. This is not, however, consistent across the school. Although there are systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, evaluation focuses on the strengths of teaching rather than assessing the extent of students' learning. As a result, senior and middle managers do not always provide clear, consistent guidance on how to promote learning is not consistently given by all senior and middle managers.

Governors are loyal supporters of the school and work hard to build links between the school and the community. They bring an appropriate level of challenge to the school's leadership. The school is well placed to make further improvement.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Inclusion is a strong feature of this small close-knit cohesive community within the school. The sixth form provides for a wide range of students through its inclusive entry arrangements. Many students enter with relatively modest attainment at GCSE level. Standards and achievement are satisfactory overall. Results for examinations in 2007 varied considerably between subjects and qualification levels. Although some students achieve very well, some students do less well than they should given their starting points. Students are aware of their target grades and attend regular academic reviews to receive feedback on their progress. Most teachers are taking greater account of the assessment information regarding students' progress to improve the quality of learning but this is not yet consistent across all subject areas.

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of courses that meet the diverse needs of the students. In particular, the schools specialist subjects make a good contribution to the students' academic and personal development. Graphic design and photography are popular and successful courses that inspire students to progress to higher education.

Students report that they feel very well supported by their tutors and they value highly the strong relationships they have with their teachers. The good level of care and guidance they receive helps them to develop positive attitudes and become mature, tolerant and responsible young adults. They make a positive contribution through supporting and setting a good example to younger learners. They receive good advice about career and education choices. This ensures that they pick the necessary subjects to go on to their chosen higher or further education course or to enter the world of work.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory overall with good capacity to improve. The headteacher and the senior leadership team are committed to developing the sixth form and provide a good level of support to the head of year. Leaders have accurately identified areas for development and are taking positive action to improve performance. Sixth form development is as a key priority in the school improvement planning at all levels in the school. Although changes to promote improvement are not yet sufficiently embedded in practice, they are beginning to have a positive impact on student progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in the sixth form.
- Focus systems to monitor and review performance more clearly on students' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards are rising and are now in line with national averages at Key Stages 3 and 4. Results in Key Stage 3 tests in 2007 showed an improvement on previous years with results in mathematics reaching above national averages. Results at GCSE have improved over the past three years with a higher proportion of students attaining the higher grades and all students gaining at least one pass at GCSE in 2007. Students achieve well. They start school with attainment that is below average and make good progress by the end of Key Stage 4, especially in English and mathematics. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties and those students who join the school at

other times make very good progress because of effective intervention and support. The large numbers of students with English as an additional language also make good progress. Overall, there is little difference between the achievement of different groups of students although higher attaining students achieved less well in 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their high rate of attendance, good behaviour and in the harmonious relationships that contribute to the positive atmosphere in the school. Students speak enthusiastically about valuing each other's cultures and of the friendships that exist between all groups. The school offers a lively but safe and orderly environment in which students are encouraged to become responsible citizens. They identify a range of adults in the school to whom they feel they can turn for support and advice. The services of a wide range of agencies are used very effectively to ensure that students receive any additional help they may need. Students have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and choose from a range of healthy food in the school canteen. They also take part in after-school sports clubs and additional activities in the evening. Large numbers of students participate in the many extra-curricular activities on offer including visits and residential trips. Examination preparation clubs, which have been organised outside of the normal school day for Years 9 and 11, have proved particularly popular. Through the school council, students are able to show responsibility and contribute to their school community. They also make a positive contribution to the wider community; for example, helping in a Neighbourhood Renewal Education Project and raising funds for charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning is good overall. Very strong relationships between staff and students promote a collaborative approach to learning. Students achieve well in lessons where thorough planning ensures that challenging work matches their interests and abilities and they receive regular and accurate feedback on their progress. However, assessment is used inconsistently across subjects to provide clear guidance to students on how to improve their work. As a result, although students are aware of their individual targets they do not always know what they need to do to reach them. The effective deployment of support staff and well-targeted intervention helps students identified as requiring additional support to achieve well. Some subjects use teaching methods from the specialist subjects to engage different styles of learning. For example, visual representation in a mathematics lesson helped learners to understand the relationship between fractions and percentages.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school has a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all its students. This helps different groups engage with learning and make good progress. Citizenship throughout the school is well planned and comprehensive in its coverage of issues and contributes well to students' personal development. A well-balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3 meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Students can study Spanish and French if they would benefit from this extra challenge. The broad curriculum at Key Stage 4 meets a range of academic, vocational and social needs. All students in Years 10 and 11 follow at least one accredited information and communication technology (ICT) course, which contributes not only to their learning across the curriculum but also to their workplace skills. The school makes especially good provision for students who are best suited to learning for part of their week at college or in the workplace. The school makes good use of links with outside providers to enhance curriculum provision, particularly in providing work-related learning opportunities. Able, gifted and talented pupils benefit from summer schools, other extra-curricular activities and competitions. Students attend a wide range of extra-curricular activities, several of which reflect the school's specialist status and promote professional creativity. For example, talented artists travelled across Europe to participate in an art exhibition.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Students are happy, feel secure within school and value its excellent facilities. Good levels of attendance reflect the students' enjoyment of school and the safe, supportive environment that it provides. The strong academic and pastoral tracking systems swiftly identify students at risk of underachievement. A wide range of intervention supports learners and seeks to keep them engaged with their learning. Academic intervention is well planned and managed to provide support in class for individual students or for teaching in groups withdrawn from the class. The school is especially successful in providing specialised teaching for students newly arrived in the country with limited English. Saturday classes and after-school sessions provide additional support. The school works very effectively with outside agencies to access appropriate support for identified learners and their families. Rigorous systems are in place to use attainment data to track performance so students are aware of their current progress and targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The headteacher and senior leadership team are committed to the school and have been successful in raising standards and achievement. Effective action has been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and to improve attendance and reduce exclusions. Senior leaders are aware that more needs to be done. Key priorities are identified clearly in the school's development plan. Middle managers review and evaluate their areas of responsibility but the

outcomes are not consistent. Some subject leaders and heads of year take decisive action as a result which leads to improvements in performance. For example, the English and mathematics departments use accurate analysis of attainment data and effective monitoring of teaching and learning to raise standards.

The role of the governing body has improved significantly since the last inspection. They are well informed and have a good knowledge of the school's priorities for development and are working closely with senior leaders. They ensure that challenging targets are set to lead to further improvement. This contributes to the school's good capacity to improve.

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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	3
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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	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?	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	
How well 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 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	3	
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 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

15 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Brentside High School, London, W7 1JJ

Thank you all for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us during our recent inspection of your school. Many of you were keen to talk with us and we enjoyed visiting some of your lessons. We were very pleased to see how well you get on together and respect each other. You behave well and most of you clearly enjoy coming to school.

We think that your school provides you with a good education because of the good teaching, care and support you receive. You told us that there is always someone to go to for help and advice and that all the students support each other. Your teachers and support staff work very hard to help you make good progress. You have opportunities to study many different subjects and to take part in a wide range of interesting activities. The school's specialist status for visual arts provides you with some excellent opportunities to improve your education. All these things help to develop your good personal and social skills. The school encourages you to contribute to the school and the wider community and to develop the self-confidence you will need to transfer to further education or the world of work.

The sixth form is an important part of the school. The sixth formers set a good example for younger students to follow. We think the sixth form is satisfactory overall and developing. We have asked the senior managers to improve standards and make sure that students achieve as well as they can.

The headteacher and staff, helped by the governors, lead your school well. The teaching in your school is good overall but we think that it could be even better if the school leaders help the teachers focus more on how well you are learning in lessons so that you can achieve your best.

We wish you all at Brentside High School a very successful future.

Anne Wellham

Her Majesty's Inspector