

Chiswick Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102532
Local Authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	308042
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Carmen Rodney HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1199
Sixth form	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Dodge
Headteacher	Mr Alan Howson
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	Burlington Lane Chiswick W4 3UN
Telephone number	020 8747 0031
Fax number	020 8747 6620

Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Chiswick Community School is a much larger than the average secondary school with specialist status as a technology college. Over half of the students are from minority ethnic groups. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, with a small but increasing number at the early stage of learning to speak the language. The number of students eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. Although the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, the number with a formal statement of educational need is average. The school has a gender imbalance with over 60% of learners being boys, although this is much less pronounced in the new Year 7. The school has extended services including community access and adult learning, study support and holiday activities. It is an associate training school and takes a leading role in the local authority Behaviour Support Team. The school gained the Sportsmark Award in 2007 and was re-designated with the Investor in People status in 2008. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2007, the last in a succession of five headteachers in six years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection shows that after a three-year period of low achievement, the school is now providing satisfactory value for money and it is rapidly improving. Clearly, the quality of the leadership and management given by the new headteacher and senior staff has been decisive in creating a new culture of learning in which students now aspire to achieve better results. Under the headteacher's guidance, the school has, from September 2007 to the current time, successfully made the transition from a turbulent period to a stable position. Leaders and managers at all levels have quickly reinforced the concept of responsibility that all teachers are answerable for students' achievement.

Senior leaders know well the strengths and areas for improvement. Their evaluation of teaching and learning is accurate; self-evaluation and subject reviews are increasingly robust and procedures for monitoring provision are now an essential part of school improvement.

Standards are improving and are broadly average at the end of Year 9 and significantly below at the end of Year 11. Overall, achievement is now satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 4. Results have risen because of the strong and positive leadership from the headteacher who is very well supported by his senior staff. Together, in the last academic year, they introduced rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and a range of intensive support packages for the Year 11 students all of which resulted in a marked improvement in the GCSE examination results. There is now a sharp focus on students' performance. Senior leaders understand the need to ensure that all students can achieve their potential irrespective of their ability, racial or social background. For example, projects such as Black Boys Can, mentoring schemes and working with groups of parents from the Somali and African Caribbean communities have been established to increase the life chances of students from these groups. These projects are beginning to close the attainment gap between the school's and the national averages. The school realises that there is still more to do to ensure that all students from minority ethnic groups are achieving as well as their peers. As such, the school is working well with partners such as London Challenge and the local authority in the drive to raise standards.

Students' personal development and well-being are now good. Enjoyment is clear in lessons and all students spoken to were unwavering in their comments that learning is now a pleasurable experience. Students display positive attitudes to their learning, have good relationships with their teachers and attendance has improved. All of this has been possible because teachers have used the social and emotional literacy programme well to increase students' self-esteem and foster better interactions with them. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for students is satisfactory with increasingly good features. Initiatives such as the work of the curriculum support officers and the learning support unit are having a genuine impact on vulnerable students' attitudes to learning. Staff at all levels take swift action to ensure that students can learn as well as they can. Target setting and tracking systems are used robustly to identify any student underachieving; however, the routines are new and the full impact on outcomes is not yet measurable in relation to test and examination results. In addition, the school's work with external agencies and community groups is good. The recent changes have significantly improved the school's standing in the community. First, there is now a waiting list of potential entrants. Second, the very positive views from the vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire show that they support the rapid progress the school is now making. Third, parents spoken to say that their children are 'enjoying their time at school' and are helped to achieve because of the 'impressive management'. A small number of parents

expressed their concern about disruptive behaviour in lessons but the majority acknowledged that it is now good and the school deals with misbehaviour quickly and decisively.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with much that is good because of the increased emphasis on improving teaching through providing intensive support and professional development. Students reported that those subjects that were, previously failing are now engaging and inspiring. One parent summed up the improvements by describing her child's comment about the 'sick' (students' dialect for 'good') new teacher' in science' as 'high praise' because lessons now 'inspire students' to attend and absorb their learning. The school knows that it still has more to do to ensure that the best practice is shared so that teaching is consistently good.

Students' enjoyment of school is linked to the curriculum, which is progressively better matched to students' needs and interests. The provision when combined with the wide range of enrichment activities means that students are increasingly arriving at lessons wanting to learn. The specialist technology status has increased the partnership work with local primary schools and contributes well to the transition process. Further benefits include the improvements in information, communication and technology resources as a teaching tool.

The commitment and clear direction of the senior staff to raising standards underpin the recent improvements of this school. They recognise that although much has been achieved in the last academic year, there is still more to do to raise standards further and sustain the changes. They have enabled the staff to embrace changes to bring about rapid improvement and forward planning is underway. For example, further developments to the flexible curriculum are planned and the school has started the process of becoming a trust and foundation school to strengthen the already good partnership work with primary schools and the local community.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form provides a good standard of education. It is increasingly popular and recruits a high proportion of students internally from Year 11. Standards are above average for A-level and average for AS-level and the small number of vocational subjects. Achievement, while satisfactory in Year 12 is good by the end of Year 13. Overall retention is high and attendance is good. Because of the good progress Year 13 students make at A-level, a high proportion of them achieve the top grades. In 2008, students made very good progress in photography, fine art, economics, English literature, geography, German and mathematics. Progress was less good in business, physics, biology, and government and politics. Students enjoy their studies and because they are ambitious, the vast majority progress to higher education.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They benefit from a good range of enrichment and other extra-curricular activities that enable them to contribute well to the school and the wider community including the support of younger students with reading and work placements in primary schools. The curriculum is good and offers a comprehensive range of A-level courses and a small but increasing number of Level 2 vocational subjects to reflect students' needs and the school's new curriculum pathways at Key Stage 4. Good quality teaching contributes to the students making good progress. Teaching is good because teachers use their strong subject knowledge well to motivate students to participate fully in lessons and develop independent learning skills. Care, guidance and support are good. Tutors monitor students' progress closely against challenging target grades and provide very good levels of pastoral and personal support.

The management and coordination of the sixth form are good. The director works closely with heads of department to evaluate the quality of provision and raise standards. Students contribute fully to quality improvement through representatives meeting regularly with the director. Although senior leaders are aware of the need to raise the achievement of students from minority ethnic groups, an action plan has not been implemented to monitor their progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards for students of all abilities including those from minority ethnic groups.
- Ensure that the new tracking system is used rigorously to match work closely to students' ability.
- Further improve the consistency of teaching and learning so that students make more progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

On entry, standards are slightly above average. Since the last inspection, students were not reaching their full potential because until the September 2007, the school had experienced a very troubled period of instability when rigorous systems for monitoring performance and the quality of provision were not in place. As a result, most students underachieved. Standards are now improving and are broadly average by the end of Year 9. Standards at the end of year 11 are significantly below national expectations for the percentage of students achieving 5 or more A* to C GCSE passes. However, the 2008 unvalidated data from the GCSE examinations show a marked improvement as well as the results for the national tests taken at the end of Year 9. The test results were a considerable improvement compared to 2007 with a significant rise in the percentage of students exceeding the challenging targets at Level 5 and above. Year 11 students, who had a lower starting point and had experienced inconsistent teaching for four years, responded well to the intensive support provided. Altogether, 55% of students achieved five or more good GCSE results at grades A* to C and results were particularly much improved in mathematics and science with 40% obtaining 5 or more GCSE grades including English and mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress in relation to students' starting points.

The new leadership team has rightly focused on raising standards and students are now making satisfactory progress overall by the end of Years 9 and 11. However, the school has identified that some higher attaining White British boys and students of Caribbean descent are not making as much progress as their peers. The school's tracking data provide regular information on students' progress and is increasingly used well to identify and begin remedying underachievement at an early stage. There is emerging evidence that this, together with a relentless focus on improving teaching and learning is having a positive impact on the progress of all students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students enjoy coming to school. Their spiritual, cultural, social and moral development is good. Harmonious relationships between different groups of students and between students and

staff are a strength. The school's commitment to racial equality in, for example, assemblies and Black History Month, contribute well to developing students' perspectives of global, local and national issues. One student said, 'We're lucky to be in a school with so many different cultures.' Students have participated successfully in a range of cultural and social activities such as visits to museums, European countries and school productions. These activities, as well as their charitable work in the local community contribute to students having a good grasp of valuing diversity, locally, nationally and globally.

Students' understanding of how to lead healthy lives is good. Attitudes and behaviour are now good because of the effective use of well selected initiatives to support students with challenging behaviour. Attendance has improved and is now average as a result of supportive intervention programmes to motivate students. They are well aware of how to keep safe and know how to react if any incidents should occur. Students' contribution to the school and wider community is good. For example, the School Council and Students' Parliament have influenced the provision for healthy eating. Students make satisfactory progress in developing skills for the workplace through enterprise projects, careers education, use of information technology and work experience in Year 10.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with significant strengths. Where it is good and occasionally outstanding, structured planning, the teachers' expertise of their subject and the use of carefully selected activities ensure that students are engaged and make good progress. Relationships between students and staff are good. Lessons run smoothly because teachers manage behaviour well; they plan short learning activities that are pitched at the right level and engage students well. Many teachers also include short feedback sessions to assess students' grasp of the work which lead to students responding positively to their learning. However, there are inconsistencies across the school. For example, planning does not always provide enough opportunities to involve students in their learning particularly when lessons are too teacher directed. Consequently, some students become passive and do not make sufficient progress. In addition, the pace and timing of activities varies and not all teachers are equally skilled at pitching work at the right level so that progress is at least good. The school is tackling the inconsistencies and is providing effective support for inexperienced teachers. Additionally, good practitioners act as mentors and professional development is available. There is some good quality marking but students are not always given sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has begun to develop a more personalised curriculum that meets the needs of its students. At Key Stage 3, there is good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT. A well-planned 'Opening Minds' course which introduces students to cross-curricular project work and different learning styles is having a positive impact on developing their confidence and independence. Students who need further help with their learning and those at an early stage of learning English are effectively supported. Increased flexibility at Key Stage 4 gives students the option of a wide range of academic and vocational courses, and extended work placements allowing

combinations of several pathways. This is possible because the school works closely with the local college and Youth Service to meet the needs of students at risk of exclusion. The school's specialist technology status has added to the number of option choices such as product design. Progression routes of all vocational or applied subjects into the sixth form have, however, not yet been established. All students benefit from the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme but this is still undeveloped. A strong feature of the curriculum is the extensive extra-curricular and enrichment programme, which students appreciate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care guidance and support provided for students is satisfactory with many good features. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment where students, whatever their background can develop as individuals. One student commented, 'I love this school, teachers listen to you.' Bullying and racism are rare and students said that there would be a rapid response should they occur. The school's commitment to students' welfare is illustrated by its good links with a wide range of external agencies together with the dedicated provision for those who are vulnerable. There is close attention to health and safety matters and students feel safe in school. Child protection procedures are good and staff receive regular updated training. Students receive good guidance to help with their transition to the next stage of their education or into work. Academic monitoring has developed rapidly and procedures for tracking progress and identifying underachievement are in place. This monitoring has yet to have an impact on external measures of students' progress but it is seen as a vital tool in raising the standards further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior team's commitment and dedication to the school has brought staff, governors and parents together to give all they can for the benefit of the students. Planning for improvement provides clear priorities for development and is revised regularly to reflect the challenging targets to improve teaching and raise standards but at this stage, not all plans include measurable targets. The senior team is passionate that the students 'can do better.' The headteacher has been a forceful taskmaster who has forged a cohesive team with the senior staff and as enablers, they have won the support of staff. Assessment data is therefore now used rigorously to inform future provision. Middle managers are beginning analyse data but have still to ensure that information increasingly reflects the performance of different groups of students. Professional development is well regarded by the leadership team and, is used very well to develop staff expertise. For example, middle managers have opportunities to develop their leadership and management skills and all staff have access to compulsory planned training sessions that are linked to the school's priorities and performance management.

Governors play an active role in monitoring performance, identifying the next steps needed as well as holding the leadership team to account. The school has changed significantly within the last academic year and its capacity to improve further is good.

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

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/or disabilities make progress	3	

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	3	
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	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	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	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 December 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Chiswick Community School, Chiswick, W4 3UN

Thank you for making the inspection team welcome and talking to us about the work you do, and the reason why Chiswick Community School is a special place. We enjoyed the opportunities we had to meet with some of you and to talk with others in lessons. Your views on the changes at Chiswick formed an important part of the evidence for the inspection.

The school is providing a satisfactory standard of education, which is rapidly improving. Your new headteacher and team of senior staff are very determined that you can do better. During the spring and summer term, 2008, they made radical changes to ensure that your results would improve, and they rose markedly in August 2008. We were delighted with the rapid progress.

Your school has experienced a very difficult time but the new leadership team and all staff are very committed to ensuring that the changes introduced will last, as this is a new period in the life of the school. The leadership team has made this possible because, first, teachers are tracking your progress regularly to make sure that none of you under-perform. Second, your behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and your response to the changes is contributing to you making better progress, particularly in the sixth form. Third, because teaching and the curriculum are now exciting, you attend regularly. Fourth, the quality of care, guidance and support is helping to raise your aspirations through teachers setting you ambitious targets and using various projects such as mentoring to help you realise that you can do better. Fifth, no one who works with you will give up until Chiswick Community School is number one in the locality.

Of course, there are some areas of your education that need to be reviewed. We realise that your results could be much better and have asked the teachers to help you achieve higher standards. We know that your achievement is improving but have identified that consistently good teaching that makes use of assessment information on your performance will help you to make better progress. This is because work will be closely matched to your ability.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector