Heston Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102537
Local Authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	308044
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett 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 (total)	1218
Sixth form	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Lawton
Headteacher	Mr Philip Ward
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
School address	Heston Road Heston Hounslow TW5 0QR
Telephone number	020 8572 1931
Fax number	020 8570 2647

Age group	11–18
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2008
Inspection number	308044

.

© 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

Heston Community School is a larger than average 11-18 mixed school situated in Hounslow close to Heathrow Airport. The school achieved specialist status in Visual Arts in 2004. The school site is housed on a congested site that it shares with both an infant and a junior school as well as various community services. Students come from a wide range of economic and ethnic backgrounds with an increasing number eligible for free school meals. About two thirds of the students come from families where English is not their first language and a very small proportion of students are in the early stages of learning English. A significant number of students are refugees or asylum seekers. The overall number of students with learning disabilities and/or difficulties is below national average, the most significant groups are those with cognitive and learning difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional needs. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The school has a Specialist Resource Provision Unit for hearing impaired students from West London. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy Schools status, gold Artsmark and International School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Heston Community School is an improving school that provides its students with a satisfactory standard of education. Following the fall in results in 2005, there has been significant improvement in all aspects and levels of school life which has provided a good climate for learning where every child matters. Visual arts status is making a positive contribution to academic and personal development in particular, through very good display work, students' and teachers' understanding and use of visual learning styles, wide provision of arts based courses, extensive community links and innovative work with its partner schools. For example, an annual community arts festival organised by the school provides art-based workshops and an exhibition of teachers' and students' work from Heston and other local schools at nearby Osterley Park.

In this very caring and inclusive school, students' personal development and well-being are good. Students enjoy school and speak positively of the opportunities offered to them and, as a result, their attendance is consistently above the national average. They get on well together and feel safe. Most parents who responded to the inspection parental questionnaire are positive about the school. One parent said, 'I trust the school and I am happy for my children to go there.'

The headteacher provides good leadership. He is well supported by senior and middle leaders and a committed staff, and together they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. Well planned actions that have focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning have improved student achievement. However, some initiatives are not always sufficiently evaluated to maximise their impact on students' progress.

The percentage of students achieving five and more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has improved in recent years and is in line with the national average. Similarly, standards at Key Stage 3 have improved and are in line with the national average. This represents satisfactory achievement for all groups of students, including those within the Specialist Resource Provision for hearing impairment or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Teaching and learning are steadily improving. Students are shown clear learning aims for each lesson. However, some inconsistencies remain both within and across subjects, particularly in terms of assessment and activities to engage and challenge all students. Much improved use of data is enabling the school to track student progress and provide them with effective additional support. However, systems for setting targets and using data at both classroom and school level are inconsistent and, as result, targets are not always sufficiently challenging to raise standards for some students, in particular the more able. The curriculum has been reviewed recently to better meet the needs of all students and to meet the new requirements for the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Students are well prepared for the world of work through work experience and special events including enterprise and industry days.

Students have good opportunities to access a wide range of enrichment activities, many based on the visual arts specialist status or to promote safety and community cohesion, for example, the 'Staying Safe' day. The school is effectively developing its extended services through partnerships with other local schools, parent workshops and easier access to the services of local agencies. Since the previous inspection the school has effectively focused its efforts to address the issues raised, particularly in relation to developing middle leaders and the religious education (RE) curriculum as well as some increase in the use of information and communications

technology (ICT) across the curriculum. This, together with the impact of the visual arts status, shows that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Students within the Specialist Provision for Hearing Impairment are appropriately supported, integrate well into mainstream lessons and make satisfactory progress. The school's inclusive culture provides them with a secure environment for learning. All students and staff embrace the use of sign language which together with loop systems supports access to learning.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school provides well for students in the Sixth Form and there are significant strengths. The Sixth Form is well managed and as a result students attend well, a large majority progress into Year 13 and most then move successfully to higher education. Students are eager to continue their education in the school and three quarters of Year 11 students regularly progress to further study in Year 12. This is because the range of courses meets their needs well and there is a clear progression for students of all abilities. Developing partnerships with neighbouring schools and colleges are extending the range of courses offered. For example, a Creative and Media Diploma course has been introduced this year.

The care, guidance and support provided to students is outstanding. Particularly in relation to monitoring students' progress and in the guidance given for selection of courses and in making career choices. Students speak enthusiastically about the excellent relationships that they establish with teachers and the support they receive. Teachers are knowledgeable specialists in their subjects and give their time tirelessly to support individual students. Students respond very well to opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and willingly carry out independent research. This good teaching and learning enables students to achieve well. Results in advanced level GCE courses are improving rapidly and were well above average in 2008. Standards and achievement are consistently high in business studies, psychology and mathematics. In 2008, students also reached high standards in the specialist school subjects of graphics and fine art.

Students' personal development is outstanding. They willingly contribute to community cohesion by, for example organising the whole school 'cultural fusion' show. They develop excellent skills for their future economic well-being.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on improvements in teaching and learning so that it is consistently good and raises the standards and achievement of all students.
- Ensure that data and target setting at classroom and school level are used more consistently to ensure pupils make good progress in all subjects.
- Bring more rigour to the way in which the impact of new initiatives are monitored and evaluated.

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

Students enter the school with broadly average standards. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they reach Year 11, standards are in line with the national average, as shown by their GCSE results. Since 2005, there has been a steady improvement in results, although the number of students gaining five or more grades A*to C dipped in 2008. Standards in business education are well above average. Similarly, results in National Curriculum tests have improved and were slightly above the national average in 2007, with particularly good results in English. The school sets adequately challenging targets for students, but is yet to achieve its specialist school status targets. Nevertheless, there are also signs of improvement in students' achievement in specialist subjects. For example, GCSE results in art and design improved significantly in 2008, compared with the previous year.

Students with hearing impairment make satisfactory progress, in line with other students, because of teachers' awareness of their needs and the extra help and resources provided by support staff. Students with social and emotional difficulties also make satisfactory progress because teachers manage behaviour well in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Overall, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is enhanced through specialist status activities, for example the photo club for girls with low self-esteem. Staff value students as individuals and show them good levels of respect. As a result, all students, including those with hearing impairment, make significant gains in developing their confidence and independence. The ways in which students learn to think through their actions and the effects of these on others plays an important part. This ensures that students' behaviour is good and they work together in a racially harmonious atmosphere. Students say that their views are taken into account and there is always someone to turn to if they wish to discuss a problem. They particularly value the work of the year group Respect Committees in helping them resolve any issues. Students are very aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle and are keen to take part in the extra-curricular sporting activities, such as football and basketball. In all their activities, students pay attention to acting safely and they look after each other well. They take on responsibilities with enthusiasm and their contribution to the wider community is very effective, for example through initiatives undertaken by the 'student/police liaison' group. Carefully organised work placements, good ICT skills, enterprise days and posts of responsibility ensure students develop good work-based skills and as a result they are well prepared for the world work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers create a calm and purposeful working environment and have good relationships with the students. Although, there is much good teaching, overall teaching and learning are satisfactory because there are still inconsistencies. Students make good progress when activities are varied and engaging and the consistently displayed learning objectives are used to regularly assess students' learning. Students make less progress when they are unclear about what is

expected of them or assessment is less well linked to the lesson's learning aims. Students also benefit from opportunities to talk to each other and work in groups, as a result they develop self-confidence, thinking and social skills. Sometimes though, lessons lack pace and work is not well matched to meet all students' needs and interests, particularly those of higher ability. Many teachers effectively use interactive whiteboards to make lessons more interesting, but students are not sufficiently involved in using ICT to improve their learning. The quality of marking is variable as not all teachers give students sound advice about how to improve their work, nor does their marking relate to students' individual targets for improvement. Support staff work hard to support students' learning, thus ensuring that that those with additional needs, including those students in the Specialist Resource Provision, progress as much as their peers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Students have access to a broad curriculum enhanced by a range of Visual Arts specialist subjects. To meet student's diverse needs there are a wide range of academic options with clear progression routes for all students that include vocational and work related courses. The recently introduced Opening Minds curriculum into Year 7 is successfully contributing to students' good integration into secondary school and teaching them a range of important skills across the curriculum. The curriculum for all aspects of personal development is good because it develops strong personal skills, promotes good cultural and religious awareness and contributes well to community cohesion.

Students enjoy the wide range of additional activities offered which include booster classes to support a range of underachievers. An outstanding feature of the enhancement curriculum is the many opportunities students have to participate in residential journeys, both in the UK and abroad. However, the school does not sufficiently monitor and evaluate the level of participation to ensure that all students benefit. Additional learning opportunities and activities for gifted and talented students are underdeveloped.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has developed highly effective systems to guide and support students' personal development. As a result, students' attendance is good, their behaviour has improved and they develop good levels of maturity as they move through the school. At all times staff show commitment to ensuring that students' needs come first. They give freely of their time and provide an exemplary level of care. Child protection and safe guarding procedures are robust and fully meet requirements.

Comprehensive tracking of each student's academic progress is used well to pinpoint individuals who need extra support. Targets are set for every student, which is having a positive impact on raising achievement. However, inconsistency in the level of challenge and in the extent staff make use of targets in lessons limits progress for some students.

The school works well with parents and carers and a very wide range of outside agencies to support students' development. Excellent support is given to looked-after students so that this group make significant gains in their learning. Very good guidance is given to students when making career choices and almost all students move into Post-16 education or employment.

Arrangements for students to transfer both to and from the school are very effective in ensuring continuity in the students' education; parents of Year 7 students endorsed this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The highly committed headteacher has developed a shared vision that has positively changed the culture of the school. With his senior leadership team, he has very effectively developed middle leaders to drive whole school improvement. All staff are involved in self-evaluation and understand that they too are accountable for raising standards and achievement. Areas for development are accurately identified and relevant actions planned at both department and school level. The highest priority is placed on improving teaching and learning, this is focused on clear expectations and professional development and is leading to improvement in standards and in students' achievement. However, evaluation of the extent and impact of actions or initiatives taken, particularly in relation to teaching and learning, is insufficiently systematic.

Students feel cared for and secure within an harmonious culture because community cohesion is actively and effectively promoted both within school and the wider community. Governors take a keen interest in the school; as a result they are knowledgeable, supportive and able to act as effective critical friends. They pay good attention to the statutory requirements of their role. Finances and resources are well managed, particularly in relation to current difficulties in accommodation and imminent plans for new buildings.

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?	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	

[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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
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?	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	1

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	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Heston Community School,Hounslow,TW5 0QR

On behalf of your inspectors, I would like to let you know that we enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. We think that Heston Community School is an improving school that is providing you with a satisfactory education.

We hope that you will take the time to read the full report but I have highlighted the key points below.

- Your school is well led and managed.
- You all enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- You are provided with good care and guidance and as result, your personal development is good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and outstanding in the Sixth Form.
- Your achievement and standards by the end of year 11 are satisfactory and good in the Sixth Form.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4, good in the Sixth Form. Good systems are in place to track your progress.
- You work very well together and make a good contribution to school life and the wider community.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around school is good.
- You participate in a wide range of events, trips and activities, particularly in relation to the school's Visual Arts status.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- build on improvements in teaching and learning so that it is consistently good and raises your achievement
- ensure that the use of data and target setting at classroom and school level are used more consistently so you make good progress in all subjects
- improve the monitoring and evaluation of new initiatives.

You can help by being actively involved in your learning and making the most of the opportunities offered both in and out of lessons by the school.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's Inspector