

# Highlands School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132256
<b>Local Authority</b>	Enfield
<b>Inspection number</b>	315994
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Thomson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1391
6th form	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Matt Miller
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Bruce Goddard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	148 Worlds End Lane London N21 1QQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8370 1100
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<b>Age group</b>	11-18
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Highlands is a larger than average comprehensive school. The school is located in an area that is generally advantaged and the percentage of students eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The students come from a wide range of backgrounds, reflecting the cultural diversity of the area served by the school. The percentage of students with special educational needs is higher than average, although the number with statements of special educational needs is in line with the national average. In 2005 the school was awarded dual Languages and Technology Specialist Status. The headteacher has been in post since September 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Highlands School provides a satisfactory standard of education with some good and outstanding features. Students and parents are particularly complimentary about the many recent improvements. One parent said, 'I am very impressed with the way the school's standards have risen under Mr Goddard's leadership.'

The vision and determination of the headteacher are central to the recent improvements. Together with his senior leadership team, the headteacher has instilled a common purpose and all staff are focused on improvement and raising the standards students achieve. One parent commented that it is so refreshing to see so many teachers who appear 'enthusiastic, professional and united in supporting each other.' Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, the quality of leadership and management in all subjects is not yet consistent. In addition, self-evaluation and monitoring by leaders at all levels is not sharp enough and not consistent enough. The school has evaluated its provision well, is focusing on the correct areas for improvement and is in a strong position to improve further. Although several initiatives have not been in place long, there are already signs that they are having a positive impact on the progress of the students, for example, the significant improvement in behaviour and the dramatic improvement in science. Areas of development identified at the school's last inspection have been addressed, although the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not being taught fully in line with national requirements. Governors are increasingly checking and monitoring the school and provide satisfactory support.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Students enjoy their lessons and have a good range of learning experiences. Teaching assistants support students with learning difficulties and disabilities well. The work provided for them in lessons usually meets the needs of all students. However, in some lessons, the tasks are too difficult for some students and not challenging enough for others. The quality of teaching, particularly the use of assessment to plan tasks that build on what the students already know and can do is not consistent.

The school was judged satisfactory at the last inspection. Standards, following a dip, have improved and are now above average by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11. This represents satisfactory progress in relation to students' above average starting points. All students receive good care, support and guidance, including those students with learning difficulties and disabilities. These students make progress in line with the progress of others. The school's effective house-system has resulted in a harmonious, family-like community where students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have very good relationships with teachers, and are very polite and courteous towards each other. They understand well the importance of being healthy and they feel safe and know that their views are valued. They show high levels of self-confidence and enjoy school. One pupil commented, 'Every night I can't wait until the next morning to be there.'

### Effectiveness of the sixth form

#### Grade: 3

Students are positive about their experience in the sixth form and report that there have been many improvements in the last year. For example, they value the high profile of the head teacher in lessons. Students enter the sixth form with standards that are in line with those seen nationally. They make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards by the end of Y13.

The curriculum is satisfactory and it broadly meets students' needs. Students of all backgrounds and abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress on vocational courses. The school is introducing A Levels alongside other qualifications to ensure that it has a range of courses suitable for all its students. Teaching is satisfactory and is having a positive impact in raising attainment. Lessons are well planned, teachers have good subject knowledge and there are good relationships between teachers and students. However, there are not enough opportunities for students to be actively involved in their own learning. There are increasingly effective tracking and monitoring systems and good guidance for entry to higher education. Students feel well supported. One student said, 'the school knows me and my potential.' The personal development of the students is good. They are fully involved the life of the school through the house system and peer mentoring. However, they are not independent enough in their own learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features. One member of staff commented that, 'Everything is moving at an incredible speed to improve and there's a real buzz around the place.'

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching.
- Improve sharpness and consistency of self-evaluation and monitoring by leaders at all levels.
- Ensure that statutory requirements are met in ICT in Years 10 and 11

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**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students enter school in Year 7 with levels of attainment which are above average. Their progress is satisfactory and by the time they take the national tests at the end of Year 9, students reach standards that are above average. Standards have improved over the last two years. The most dramatic improvement is seen in science where standards from a low base are now just above average. The school acknowledges that improvements in the attainment of the most able students have not been as rapid as that seen in other groups. At GCSE level, standards overall are above national averages for all indicators including the proportion of students gaining five higher grade (A\* to C) passes, including English and mathematics. Year on year there has been a rapid and sustained improvement in the standards students attain by the end of Year 11. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities also make satisfactory progress throughout the school. An individualised monitoring and tracking system identifies underperforming students. Although effective intervention strategies are raising attainment, annual targets could be more challenging. The data held by the school indicate that the school's specialist status targets are met in technology, but not in modern foreign languages. Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress overall. Their progress is particularly good in vocational subjects.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students really enjoy learning. Attendance and punctuality are above national averages, helping to raise achievement. Effective health and safety procedures support students' understanding of keeping safe both in and out of school. Personal development is outstanding in promoting students' well being. A confident school council makes important decisions on behalf of their peers. This has included important safety issues such as a consultation on vehicle speed limits outside the school. In Years 10 and 11 students seize the opportunity to take on responsibilities, they enjoy being part of the management of the school and provide excellent role models. Students develop good workplace skills through lively learning techniques; they experience group, paired and research work as seen in English and art. However, students have low basic ICT skills that hamper their future economic well-being. Good behaviour enables students to be happy and progress without disruption in class. Students develop excellent spiritual, moral and social skills, while the curriculum challenges them to explore their cultural understanding. Students are excited about the prospect of the new school production 'Jesus Christ Super Star'; they feel school productions build up self-esteem and confidence. Similarly, house assemblies give students the opportunities to showcase their skills and talents and one pupil quoted, 'even rehearsals give you a real buzz.' Students know how to keep healthy, and have taken an active role in achieving their Healthy Schools Award.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teachers are well organised and have good subject knowledge. They plan lessons well so that students have a good range of learning experiences that motivate them and ensure enjoyment. Different styles of learning ensure that students are engaged in their lessons. Teachers generally make learning objectives clear at the beginning of lessons. However, they do not highlight the objectives sufficiently throughout the lesson and this restricts progress. In some lessons there is not always enough variation in the challenge of the tasks and some students comment that they find the tasks too easy or too difficult. Teachers are not always extending students thinking in the work they provide. This area is a focus for development in the school. Books are marked regularly, but not always with enough detail for students to get frequent written feedback on their progress or specific enough information on what to do to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and there are many good features. The school offers a good, broad curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9. The two-year programme in Years 7 and 8 has been extended into Year 9 in English, mathematics and science, as in most schools. In Years 10 and 11 there is a good range of options, although the number of vocational subjects is relatively limited. The school is developing its 14-19 curriculum in conjunction with other schools and

the local authority. There is a good emphasis on modern language provision in the school, reflecting the specialist status and students can choose from five languages in Year 10. Work related learning and enterprise skills are promoted well. All students benefit from work experience and some students undertake a vocational course at college one afternoon per week. There is no core ICT currently timetabled in Years 10 or 11 and although computers are used widely in lessons, there has been no audit of the provision to ensure it fully meets the requirements set out in the National Curriculum. Extra-curricular opportunities are good with many students participating in sports, drama, music and many other activities. The curriculum is enriched well though good use of visitors and the local community. Personal and social skills are developed very well through residential visits abroad, and school-community links.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The commitment of staff to individual student development ensures that the quality of care guidance and support is good. The academic progress of students is monitored through interim reports, and individual mentoring is having a positive impact on achievement. Students generally receive good feedback, but this is inconsistent across subjects. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place. The whole staff team works hard to create a safe place for learning and students feel safe. Good collaboration with outside agencies strengthens and promotes the school's guidance and support systems. Parents have confidence in the school because they have good advice on their child's progress and pathways to the next stage of learning. However, a small minority of parents feel that the school does not always take on board their views. Students are confident to approach adults in the school to help solve problems and value the role of peer mentors highly. A good system regularly monitors students at risk and case studies illustrate attention to detail when caring for vulnerable students. Staff are making better use of these data and academic support and guidance are becoming stronger as a result.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features and improving. The headteacher has swiftly identified the school's strengths and areas needing improvement. He has quickly gained the confidence of staff, students, governors and parents, so that there is a high level of unity in pursuing the school's direction. Following improvements to the way in which the senior team organises its work and shares responsibilities, members are working cohesively and effectively. The senior team has recognised the importance of faculty and subject leaders in improving teaching, learning and achievement and their roles and capabilities are being developed. While leadership is particularly strong in English, humanities and science, it is not consistent across all subjects. Similarly, the quality of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning by senior and middle leaders is also not fully consistent across the school. Consequently, the school has not yet secured its aim of raising the quality of teaching and students' achievement above satisfactory levels. However, the school's self-evaluation is becoming an increasingly effective tool for identifying necessary improvements. This is seen particularly in the significant improvement in behaviour, which is now good and supports learning well. During

the past year the governors have improved their contribution to the school's direction. They are beginning to provide effective challenge and guidance for securing improvement. The clarity of vision and unity of purpose towards raising standards, such as the rapid rise seen in science, mean that the school has a good capacity for future improvement.



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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	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?	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	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	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Highlands School, London, N21 1QQ

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit. We valued the opportunity to talk with you in discussion groups, in lessons and as we chanced to meet you about the school. It was clear that you enjoy school very much and are benefiting from the many recent improvements. We found that Highlands provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. We were particularly impressed by your personal development and well being. You behave well in the school and are polite to visitors and your teachers. You value opportunities to take part in every aspect of school life, such as house assemblies and productions. The school is careful to provide you with sensible subject choices and plenty of additional activities, including exciting and affordable trips to interesting places. However, we would like to see more ICT in Years 10 and 11. You are well looked after. The standard of your work has improved greatly over the past year, but your headteacher and teachers are constantly looking for ways to improve the school. Because you cooperate well with what your school is trying to do for you, we are convinced that you will continue to support your teachers and respond actively to their attempts to help you make even faster progress.

To help the school to improve, we have asked the governors, Mr Goddard and the staff to:

- improve the consistency in the quality of teaching
- improve the way leaders and managers check on the performance of teachers and students
- ensure that the ICT curriculum in Years 10 and 11 fully complies with the requirements set out in the National Curriculum.

Good luck with your up and coming production of 'Jesus Christ Superstar'.

With good wishes for the future.

Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector