

# Hampstead School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100052
<b>Local Authority</b>	Camden
<b>Inspection number</b>	323220
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Russell HMI

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>	Comprehensive
<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 (total)	1303
Sixth form	253
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Geoff Berridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jacques Szemalikowski
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2005
<b>School address</b>	Westbere Road Hampstead London NW2 3RT
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7794 8133
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7435 8260

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## 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 sized school serves an area to the north of the London Borough of Camden; many students from neighbouring boroughs also attend the school. The large majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and around half speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The school was designated as a specialist technology college in 1997. The current headteacher joined the school in 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

Hampstead School is providing a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Many aspects of the school's work are good, including the school's successful sixth form; some aspects are outstanding.

Some aspects of the school's performance dipped after the last inspection. In particular, attendance and GCSE results fell sharply in 2006. However, rigorous action by the school's senior leaders quickly corrected this dip. Students are now making satisfactory and improving progress as they move from year 7 to year 11. Students' attendance has also improved considerably and is now close to the national average.

The school is a pleasant environment. Students from different backgrounds are supportive of each other and get on very well together. Behaviour around the site and in most lessons is generally good; students are polite, friendly and positive. However, low-level misbehaviour disrupts too many lessons: while generally amounting to no more than silliness, calling out, or a tendency to talk when the teacher is talking, it slows progress. Some students are also slow to move around the site, making it difficult for lessons to start crisply. The quality of lessons is mixed. There is much good and some excellent teaching. However, too many lessons are barely satisfactory and a few are inadequate. In some cases, the lesson itself is not well planned or delivered by the teacher. In other cases, the lesson is well planned, but the teacher struggles to manage low-level misbehaviour.

The school has continued to improve the very high quality of care and support that it provides for students. The way in which the school monitors students' academic progress has improved enormously. This was a key area for improvement at the last inspection and much has been achieved in a relatively short time. Comprehensive systems are now in place to set targets for students and to check their progress at regular intervals. Students are much clearer about what they are aiming for, how well they are doing, and how they can improve. The curriculum has also improved since the last inspection. In particular, year 10 and 11 students now have access to a much wider range of vocational courses. Students' contribution to the school and wider community is a particular strength. There are many, diverse opportunities, including a strong school council and links with schools overseas.

The school has made good progress in the last couple of years and is well placed to continue this improvement. It has successfully recovered from a dip in performance and standards are rising. Many areas have improved rapidly and the main issues raised at the last inspection have been dealt with successfully. The large majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the school's progress, although a small number expressed concerns about behaviour, and the way in which the school communicates with them and listens to their concerns. The headteacher and senior leadership team are providing good leadership for the school. They have set a clear direction for improvement over the past two years and they have a thorough and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The effectiveness of the school's middle leaders is variable. While some are making a significant contribution to the school's development and improvement, this is not yet consistently the case. Consequently, the overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory rather than good.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

The sixth form is popular and successful. The school's commendably inclusive approach means that students enter the sixth form with below average standards. They make good progress during their time in the sixth form and leave with standards that are similar to national averages. A large number of students study the specialist subjects of science and mathematics; the school is in the best 20 schools nationally for participation in advanced level science courses. In many cases, students progress to advanced courses by building on foundation or intermediate programmes of study. Most go on to university when they leave.

Sixth form teaching is more consistently effective than in the rest of the school. Teachers adapt their teaching styles well to match students' individual needs and abilities. While most lessons are varied and interesting, a few are too teacher led, with limited opportunities for students to become more actively involved. The curriculum meets the diverse needs of students well, as the school offers a good range of academic and vocational courses. Further course development is limited by the school's site, but well thought out plans are in place to develop extra courses as the accommodation improves in the coming years.

Sixth form students receive outstanding care, guidance and support. The school takes great care to ensure that students choose appropriate options and a robust system for tracking progress allows the early identification of those at risk of underachievement. Sixth form students act as excellent role models across the school; younger students appreciate the support and guidance of their older peers.

The sixth form is well led and managed. Leaders have a clear sense of purpose. Students feel valued and respected, as their views are taken seriously.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning, ensuring that the good practice in some subject areas is shared and used to raise standards further.
- Reduce the incidence of low-level misbehaviour in lessons.
- Improve middle leaders' contribution to the school's improvement and development.

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 generally enter the school with standards that are close to national averages, although standards on entry have declined somewhat in recent years. They make satisfactory progress in the main school and good progress in the sixth form.

National Key Stage 3 test results improved in 2007 and students made good progress. The school is yet to receive some of its 2008 national test results. GCSE examination results dipped in 2006, but improved considerably in 2007 and were close to national averages. These students made satisfactory progress given their starting points and capabilities. The school's initial analysis of the unvalidated 2008 results indicates that improvements were sustained and that students made similar or slightly better progress. Standards in the specialist subject of design technology have been low in recent years, although they are now beginning to improve.

Students make good progress in the sixth form. Examination results dipped slightly in 2007, but improved considerably in 2008: achievement was very high given students' starting points and capabilities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students enjoy school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by the school's extensive opportunities for enrichment. In particular, students develop a thorough understanding of other cultures and of global issues. Students feel very safe in school and say that any bullying that does occur is dealt with effectively. The large majority like the new school uniform. The wide range of opportunities for students to engage in sport and physical education help them to develop healthy lifestyles. The school has been working hard to improve students' punctuality to school; this has improved, although some students do not arrive punctually to lessons. Students are well prepared for their future lives. A high proportion of year 11 students stay on into the sixth form and progress into higher education. The development of a wider range of vocational courses is helping many students to develop good skills for the workplace.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of lessons varies markedly. In the many good lessons, teachers manage students well and use a variety of activities and strategies. In these lessons, students are very clear about what they are trying to achieve. As a result, these lessons move at a quick pace; students are attentive, enjoy learning, and make good progress. However, there are currently too many weaker lessons for students to make good progress overall. Some of these lessons are poorly planned, with insufficient variety and a poor match of work to students' individual needs and abilities. In many cases, students are not clear what they are trying to achieve and their learning is not checked and consolidated by the teacher. Teaching is stronger and more consistent in the sixth form and this supports students' better progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is developing well. The introduction of a variety of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 has made it easier for students to choose courses to match their individual strengths, interests and learning styles. Leaders realise that further development would be valuable; sensible, well-considered plans are in place to widen the curriculum still further in September 2009. A new course in Year 7 integrates work in English and humanities, and has been designed to help students to develop learning skills. Although still very new, year 7 students are very positive about the course and there are early indications that it is helping them to make more rapid progress. At the time of the last inspection, the school was not meeting statutory requirements for religious education at Key Stage 3; the curriculum now meets these requirements.

Curriculum enrichment is a particular strength. Students comment positively on activities led by professional artists, musicians, architects and writers. Many students participate in the wide range of sporting activities, clubs and competitions. A well-established after-school support programme offered by all departments provides excellent study support opportunities. Provision

for information and communication technology (ICT) is strong and students in all years study the subject.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has established strong systems to care for and support students. There is a very strong commitment to inclusion and staff work hard to meet students' diverse and sometimes challenging needs. Child protection arrangements, risk assessments and recruitment procedures are exemplary. Students who require additional help, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and English as an additional language, are provided with extensive and excellent support.

Processes for tracking and monitoring students' progress are now much more secure. These have developed quickly and, although still relatively new, are already fairly well embedded in the school's work. The information that they generate is increasingly being used to identify and target additional help to students who are not doing as well as they could.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Senior leaders and governors are providing clear direction for the school. They acknowledge the need to develop the contribution that middle leaders are able to make to the school's improvement. Structures and roles have recently changed and middle leaders are now being given greater responsibility. Although still new, these changes have been well managed. As a result, middle leaders are enthusiastic and optimistic about their developing importance in the school.

At the time of the last inspection, processes for monitoring the quality of lessons were limited and lacked rigour. This area of the school's work has improved considerably. Lessons are observed regularly and judged accurately. Improvements in target setting and the tracking of students' progress are enabling leaders to analyse patterns across the school and to hold staff more accountable for students' achievement. This, along with information from lesson observation and a range of other sources of evidence, informs senior leaders' clear and accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness. The evaluations carried out by middle leaders of the effectiveness of their areas are more variable in quality.

The school's specialist status has been used well, for example to improve the use of ICT across the school and support strong links with the community. The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
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	

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
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	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**

03 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Hampstead School, London, NW2 3RT

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings. We found that your school is satisfactory overall, that it is improving, and that it has some good and even outstanding features. Many things have improved in the last two years.

We were impressed by the atmosphere around school. Students from different backgrounds clearly get on very well together. We found students to be polite, friendly and positive. Staff care for you and support you very well. We were particularly impressed by your contribution to the school and wider community; you have many very good opportunities. The school has also been working hard to develop the curriculum so that it meets your needs and interests as closely as possible. In particular, you can now choose from a much wider range of courses in Years 10 and 11.

The quality of lessons is variable. We saw many good and outstanding lessons, but also quite a few that were less effective. We felt that behaviour was good around the site and in many lessons, but that minor misbehaviour disrupted too many lessons. We have asked the school to work on these areas as a priority.

Your school's leaders understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to making further improvements. The inspection team wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Russell

Her Majesty's Inspector