

Cambridge School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100382
Local Authority	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	335533
Inspection dates	15–16 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Redpath
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Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The dates of the inspection fell within the school's annual, planned activity week. This meant that the vast majority of students were off site on visits on the first day, and doing follow-up work on the second. This reduced significantly the number of opportunities for inspectors to observe teaching and learning. All the sessions that took place, including those that inspectors observed, involved students who were grouped together only for the week's activities. Therefore, in most cases there was a wide age range within each of the seven groups. All groups were observed. Meetings were held with a range of teaching and support staff, governors and students. The team observed the school's work, and looked at documentation such as assessment data, monitoring records, a variety of policies and procedures, and development planning. The 15 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the procedures for analysing students' progress, evaluating their achievements, and for using this information to set challenging individual targets
- the mechanisms through which governors hold school leaders to account
- the links between budgeting and school development planning
- students' attendance at school, college and with other education providers.

Information about the school

Cambridge School provides for students with moderate learning difficulties and complex needs. Not all of them live in Hammersmith and Fulham, as the school also has on roll students from seven other London boroughs. All of the students have a statement of special educational needs, and about three quarters of them are boys. Students represent a wide a range of ethnic backgrounds, which reflects the multicultural nature of the school's location. Between them, students have 17 different home languages and almost half of them are at an early stage of learning English. A similar proportion is entitled to free school meals and a comparable percentage lives in single-parent households.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Cambridge School provides an outstanding quality of education and a very rich learning experience. It is a vibrant and progressive school with a 'buzz' around the place. Students are always busy and working productively. Their achievements are outstanding. This is because they love being at school, which they describe as 'amazing', 'friendly and safe', and 'good for people who need a little bit more help'.

School is fun because students receive an excellent curriculum that provides a variety of exciting learning activities in and out of school. Outstanding teaching results in accelerated learning, although attainment is low because of the nature of the students' special educational needs. Students make exceptionally good progress during their time in the school, although leaders use a limited range of procedures to validate and confirm that. However, within the procedures that are used, leaders' attention to detail and their full commitment to promoting equality of opportunity ensure that all students' progress is monitored and that extra provision is available for those who find learning more difficult.

The students confirm that they feel safe in school and that the staff look after them very well. Safeguarding procedures are very secure. The level of care, guidance and support is outstanding and this contributes greatly to students' exceptionally good personal development. The students make excellent progress in their personal development and they become very impressive ambassadors for the school. Not only can they quote the school's guiding principle of 'Courtesy, consideration and respect', but they also understand what it means and apply it in practice on a day-to-day basis. They are polite, respectful and conversational young people whose attitudes are invariably positive and who behave very well in classes and around school. Despite students' attendance being barely average, they are prepared well for leaving school. All Year 11 leavers in 2010 have a place in further education, employment or training.

School leaders have been able to build very effectively on the findings of the previous inspection because they are sharply focused, with a very clear image of what sort of school they want. They are well supported by governors. Leaders have implemented the robust monitoring systems that give them detailed ongoing information about the school, and they have forged excellent links with partner organisations. As a result, there is outstanding capacity for the current excellent standard of leadership and management to be sustained, driving forward further improvement. There are good links with parents and carers, although many believe that the school could work in a close partnership with them to support their child's learning at home and should provide more homework.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Explore and then develop the use of additional procedures for measuring students' progress and evaluating their achievements.
- Enable parents to make a planned contribution to supporting their children's learning at home.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The school's very high quality provision has an outstanding impact on students during their time in school. The excellent gains that they make in their personal development act as the launch pad for accelerated learning. This enables all groups of students, including those who speak English as an additional language, to make excellent progress over time.

Students are enabled to develop self-esteem and self-confidence during their first two years in school. Their basic literacy and numeracy skills improve as the promotion of these key skills through all subjects begins to bite. Of particular value is the impact of the language for living programme. This highly structured programme enables students to make outstanding gains in the practical use of language, communication and mathematical skills in everyday life. This includes topics such as using a telephone and making an emergency call, asking directions, using the underground, making appointments and using timetables. They become more confident learners and more competent communicators. Therefore, their rate of learning begins to move steadily upwards or, as one parent described it: 'My daughter has come on in bundles and her first year has been fantastic'. In their final three years, the gradient gets much steeper as students really begin to flourish and successfully complete a range of accredited courses and examinations. Some follow not only a few GCSE courses, in subjects like mathematics, but also pre-vocational and vocational courses, such as catering and motor vehicle maintenance. They also become accredited as sports leaders and peer mentors.

Students have an excellent understanding of how to live a safe and healthy lifestyle. They know that remaining healthy involves exercise as well as a good diet, and they understand how to stay safe. They make many very good contributions to the school and local communities, which reflects their excellent appreciation of the responsibilities of living and working with others. They work well together and celebrate each other's success unreservedly. They demonstrate other features of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through day-to-day interactions with others and their ability to deal with confrontation and to reflect on their own and others' actions. Attendance is no better than broadly average, but the school is making inroads in trying to improve it and a positive trend is appearing. The school routinely exceeds its target as attendance has increased annually since 2007, and unauthorised absence has gone down each year during the same period.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The most striking feature of the school's excellent provision is the way in which the needs of individuals and groups of students are met. In Years 7 to 9, classes are determined primarily by students' curriculum needs. This approach means that while some students are taught by subject specialists, for others a class-based approach, with most lessons taught by the same teacher, is appropriate. In both cases, the very strong, planned focus on promoting literacy and numeracy skills is supported by community-based learning, including a residential visit, and a programme of enrichment activities. These include visitors into schools, such as through the Creative Partnerships programme, and an excellent menu of lunchtime, after-school, weekend and holiday clubs and activities. A very good work-related learning programme involving college links, vocational courses and work experience contributes very well to students' good preparation for leaving school.

Teachers manage students' behaviour very effectively; relationships are excellent. Their excellent appreciation of students' achievements, informed by accurate and routine assessments, enable them to encourage independent learning. They provide activities that stretch students and which encourage investigative learning, including the use of computers. Class learning is supplemented extremely well by personalised interventions, in literacy for instance. Highly effective one-to-one support such as this is a prominent feature of Cambridge School. A very effective learning mentoring team and the input of

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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transition mentors and school and family liaison staff complement greatly the work of colleagues from other agencies. Collectively they make an important contribution to the school's overall outstanding care and welfare provision. Students receive astute and insightful support and guidance and students confirm that teachers let them know just how well they are doing with their work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders are ambitious. They have a clear, strategic vision that is underpinned by very high expectations. Robust monitoring systems feed them with accurate information about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and these are communicated to governors so that they are full partners in raising standards. Recent improvements to the ways in which governors seek out information for themselves through planned visits and the degree to which they challenge school leaders are adding to their effectiveness. Governors maintain close oversight of finances and ensure that planned developments are budgeted for accurately.

Safeguarding arrangements were very robust at the time of the inspection and they ensure that students are safe. The school is extremely effective in providing students with equality of opportunity and overcoming discrimination. Potential barriers to learning are dismantled and data are checked to make sure that no students or groups of students underperform compared with other students. This is an important component of the school's good contribution to promoting community cohesion. Its action plan is intended to make it even more effective in this respect. While there has not been sufficient time for the school to show the full impact of its work, the early signs are promising. For instance, this year's focus is to develop awareness of the world, with a major objective of developing the idea of being a world citizen.

School leaders make good very good use of the information that reaches them via different communication channels. For instance, they analyse students' assessment data to check on every students' learning and they respond to the outcomes of this work by providing additional support if required. They also attempt to measure the value that they add to students' learning by comparing their progress with that of students elsewhere, although this is restricted to just one relatively narrow procedure. The school views parents and carers as equal partners in students' education and a great deal of parent support work takes place. However, the school does not put together packages

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that involve parents enough in supporting their children's learning at home.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Few parents returned their questionnaires and those that were returned paint a mixed picture of the school, with small minorities showing dissatisfaction with some aspects of its work. Even so, some parents left no doubt about their support for the school with comments such as: 'I could not have chosen a better school for my son'. The school had carried out its own annual survey shortly before the inspection and almost half of parents replied to that. That gave a more comprehensive picture of their views, which were overwhelmingly positive except that the lack of homework was a consistent theme of dissatisfaction. Inspectors agree that the school could do more to involve parents in their children's learning. They do not agree, however, with those parents who thought that their children did not make enough progress. On balance, the parent who wrote 'carry on the good work' summed up the views of parents, and inspectors agree with that.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cambridge School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 15 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	67	5	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	53	6	40	1	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	33	7	47	3	20	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	27	8	53	2	13	1	7
The teaching is good at this school	5	33	10	67	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	33	9	60	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	27	10	67	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	4	27	10	67	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	33	9	60	1	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	47	6	40	2	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	27	9	60	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	53	5	33	1	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	47	8	53	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Cambridge School, London, W6 0LB

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We had a really good time there. You told us that you enjoy school and now we can see why. Yours is an excellent school and so you do really well with your work. You make excellent progress. Lessons are very good and you do lots of interesting things.

You also grow up very well as young people. You certainly know what 'courtesy, consideration and respect' mean and so you get on with each other very well. You behave very well but a few of you do not go to school as much as you should. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.

All the staff take very good care of you and you told us that you feel safe in school. You get lots of support when you join the school and staff help you a great deal when you are getting ready to leave. I was very pleased to see that so many of you go to college.

The people who run your school do a really good job but they want to make Cambridge School even better. We have given them two ideas to help.

- Make sure that they know that every one of you is doing as well as you possibly can.
- Show your parents how they can work with you at home.

Those of you who do not attend school as often as you should, ought to try going more often. You do not know what you are missing!

Finally, thank you once again and I wish every one of you the best of luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell

Lead inspector

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