

Holloway School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100453
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	335545
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	788
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Rees
Headteacher	Mr Bob Hamlyn
Date of previous school inspection	0 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 35 lessons or parts of lessons, observing 30 teachers, and two assemblies. They spent a third of their time observing learning. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, self-evaluation from different departments, analyses of students' progress and attainment, and questionnaires completed by 65 parents and carers, 168 pupils and 24 staff.

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

- the accuracy of the school's assessment and analysis of the attainment and progress of Year 11 students in English, mathematics, science and the specialist subjects
- how well assessment is used to plan teaching that challenges students, actively involves them in their learning and provides high-quality feedback
- the quality of evaluation by senior and middle managers, with a particular focus on English, mathematics and science and the specialist subjects.

Information about the school

Holloway school is smaller than the average secondary school. There are more boys than girls. Most students live locally, and they come from a diverse range of socio-economic and ethnic communities. The largest minority ethnic groups represented are of Turkish, Eastern European, Asian, Black Caribbean and Black African heritage. The percentages of students who speak English as an additional language, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to be eligible for free school meals are well above the national averages. The school has had specialist designation as a sports college since 2005 with information and communication technology (ICT) as a second specialism. It was awarded National Healthy School status in 2007.

There have been significant changes to the senior leadership team and to the leadership of the English, mathematics and science faculties since the last inspection.

The school has recently moved into new and refurbished buildings and has a new sports centre and swimming pool.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Holloway School is a rapidly improving school and has good capacity to improve further. Since the last inspection a shared commitment from staff, students and parents to raise aspirations and accelerate learning has improved the outcomes for individuals and groups of students. The school supports the needs of a diverse school population well to provide a well-ordered, purposeful and safe community where students value and respect each other's differences.

Students' achievement, although improving, is satisfactory because of low standards of literacy and numeracy and variations in the quality of teaching. However, students make good progress overall from very low starting points. The high proportion of students with additional learning needs receive high-quality care and support, including very effective transitional arrangements when joining from primary school or part-way through their secondary education. This support makes an important contribution to the quality of learning. The many students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and sometimes excellent progress because of support and intervention that are carefully tailored to their needs. Information and individual guidance provided to help students make the best choices for future courses and their personal health and safety are very good. The needs of individuals and groups of students are further supported by a good curriculum that is broad-ranging and relevant to their interests, particularly at Key Stage 4. Higher-attaining students have opportunities to study a range of academic courses, and partnerships with local colleges offer appropriate vocational routes. Provision for the specialist subjects; sports, physical education and ICT, as well as business and enterprise education is good, contributing to students' good understanding of the world of work. However, students' underdeveloped literacy and numeracy skills mean that the overall contribution the school makes to their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Recent strategies to tackle low attendance have resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of persistent absentees and have raised attendance to above the national average. Behaviour around the school and in the majority of lessons is good, although in a few lessons it is only satisfactory in response to less effective teaching. The quality of teaching has improved as a result of increased monitoring and a greater focus on using assessment to support learning. Where teaching is good, the quality of learning is also good because teachers plan activities to match students' prior understanding and focus on instilling good habits to learning. However, these features are not yet embedded in enough lessons. The development of key skills is not always given a sufficiently high profile in lesson planning, and the quality of feedback that students get from teachers on their progress and the quality of their work varies because marking, dialogue and

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formative assessment are not yet consistently good across all subjects. Students are set targets but they do not always understand what they mean, or what they need to do to reach them.

The able and resilient headteacher, supported by a committed governing body, has created a strong team of senior and middle leaders who are effectively removing any barriers to learning. A commitment to ensure that every student has an equal chance to succeed underpins the ethos of the school and is successfully eliminating any differences in achievement between different groups of students. The successes gained so far are clearly shown by examination results that have been improving steadily during the past three years. In 2009 the school achieved its highest ever results at GCSE. The school knows where the remaining weaknesses lie and how to tackle them, so that it can continue on its journey of improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of literacy and numeracy by:
 - providing consistently good teaching in English and mathematics to develop basic skills
 - making sure that all teachers consider skills development when planning lessons.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - making consistently good use of assessment to support learning
 - making sure that students understand their targets
 - making sure that all teachers instil habits for good learning
 - making sure that all teachers mark students' work regularly and provide clear and helpful comments on what students need to do to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In the lessons observed, despite some strong aspects, the quality of learning was too variable. The majority of students are well-behaved and interested in learning. They respond well when good teaching provides the correct level of challenge and opportunities for them to become involved in their learning. When teachers are not alert to students' levels of understanding, and activities do not take different learning styles into account, students sometimes lose concentration and motivation. The quality of learning provided through additional support and intervention is very good, and this makes a significant contribution to students' good overall progress.

Most outcomes relating to students' personal development and well-being have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Students enjoy coming to school and value the school community because they feel safe, well cared for and supported. They have a very good understanding of the risks associated with factors that have an impact on their physical and mental health and well-being. The school is successful in

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promoting the values of respect and responsibility and encourages all students to get involved in the life of the school and the wider community. There is a 'zero tolerance' approach to any anti-social behaviour, bullying, racism or discrimination. Large numbers of students participate in sport and benefit from leadership opportunities as peer mentors, sports leaders and senior students.

Attendance, judged satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, is now above average. The school has been very effective in tackling persistent absence. Attainment in English and mathematics, although improving, remain below the national average because leaders are tackling a legacy of underachievement caused by staffing difficulties and some weak teaching. There has been rise in the proportion of students achieving the higher grades at GCSE and the school is reducing the variation in achievement between subjects that existed at the time of the last inspection. Students following vocational courses achieve well and almost all students go on to further education, employment or training.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

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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Although there is much teaching that is good, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Rigorous systems have been introduced to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Thorough monitoring, scrutiny of marking, moderated assessment and reviews by senior and middle leaders are having an impact. The use of assessment to support learning has been a priority for professional development for the past year and this is improving the quality of learning. Good practice is shared and disseminated but it is not sufficiently embedded to make the quality of learning consistently good. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan learning activities that are based on what students are capable of achieving and what they have already learnt. Targeted questioning, along with peer- and self-assessment, involves the whole class so that teachers and additional adults can assess progress accurately and amend the teaching if required. In less effective lessons there is an over-reliance on worksheets, gap-filling and sorting exercises, and insufficient focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills.

Since the last inspection the quality of the curriculum has improved from satisfactory to good. Personal, social and health education and citizenship contribute very effectively to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and an understanding of their community. Students studying vocational courses in media, sports, ICT and business at Key Stage 4 are achieving well. Higher-attaining students benefit from an enhanced and extended curriculum which has led to an improvement in those attaining the higher levels and grades. Extra-curricular activities, community projects and strong links with the adjacent special school provide opportunities for students from different backgrounds and of different ages to interact and work together.

Good levels of support and care are carefully targeted to improve the confidence, self-esteem and achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and potentially vulnerable students. Students with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties receive very good levels of support from the team of learning mentors and looked after children receive high-quality support that allows them to achieve as well as their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection, leadership and management have been strengthened at all levels. The headteacher and senior leaders communicate an ambitious vision to drive and secure improvement and take determined action to make sure that all groups of

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students are treated equally and that there is no difference in the performance or experience of different groups. By introducing rigorous self-evaluation across departments and year groups and appointing capable managers of English, mathematics and science, the capacity of middle leaders to influence the quality of learning across the school has increased. The teaching and learning champions group are effective in sharing good practice and contributing to the professional development of staff and other adults. However, the skills and understanding of a minority of middle managers and a few teachers are not yet sufficiently well developed to achieve consistently good performance across all subjects.

The school meets all the statutory requirements for safeguarding and works well with external agencies such as health and social services to promote the safety, health and welfare of all students. Since the last inspection the school has engaged with parents more effectively by helping them to support learning by improving their children's attendance, punctuality and standards of uniform, and by encouraging them to celebrate achievement. The school actively encourages parents and carers to communicate with the school and keeps them well informed.

Leaders have a good understanding of the local context of the school, but the impact of actions to promote cohesion within the wider community and beyond has not been fully evaluated. Governors are well informed and actively engaged in school life. They understand and take their responsibilities very seriously and challenge vigorously to make sure that the school's actions have a positive impact on students' learning and well-being.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are happy with their children's experiences and progress at the school. They believe that the school keeps students safe and are very pleased with the school's work to promote healthy lifestyles. The few additional comments made by parents were mostly positive. They included praise for the school's leadership and the work of the learning mentors and two concerns about behaviour and lack of homework. Inspection evidence supports the parents' view that the school provides good care and support and helps their children to make good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holloway 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 788 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	43	30	46	0	0	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	34	52	28	43	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	64	24	37	4	6	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	47	33	50	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	40	33	50	5	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	43	32	49	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	37	37	57	3	5	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)	26	40	37	57	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	45	26	40	5	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	47	29	45	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	43	32	49	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	47	30	46	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	54	26	40	3	5	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



5 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Holloway School, Islington, N7 0JG

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. We think that your new classrooms, swimming pool and sports centre are fantastic. We were very pleased to see that you get on so well together and value and respect each others' differences. The school works hard to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to learn in a safe and well-ordered community.

The school provides you with many opportunities to study a range of subjects at different levels and to attend different clubs and activities. You can make the most of these opportunities by trying not to miss a single day of school and doing your best in every lesson.

We were impressed with the improvements that have taken place since the last inspection. Your school is satisfactory overall with many things that are good. The GCSE examination results for 2009 were the best ever and show that the school is helping you to make good progress. The results are not as high as they could be in some subjects and we would like the school to help you to improve your spelling, writing and number work. We have asked the teachers in the English and mathematics departments to focus even more on building up these skills, and teachers in other subjects to think about how they can help as well.

Teaching has improved and we noticed how well you worked and behaved in lessons which were interesting and got you involved. We have asked the school to make sure that all teaching is matched well to your range of abilities and builds on what you already know and understand. We have asked all the teachers to mark your books regularly and give you feedback so that you understand your targets and know how you can improve in every subject.

The headteacher and senior staff lead your school very well and the staff and governors are committed to providing you with good levels of care and support to keep you safe and healthy.

We wish you all at Holloway a happy and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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