

# Highshore School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 100872              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Southwark           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 335608              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 24–25 November 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Greg Sorrell        |

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 special                               |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–18   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form         | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 126   |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 9   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                              |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Sally Smith                                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Christine Wood                                  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 9 January 2007                                  |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Bellenden Road<br>Peckham<br>London<br>SE15 5BB |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 020 76397211                                    |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 020 72529024                                    |
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|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 11–18               |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, external agencies and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at much of the school's planning and safeguarding documents. Inspectors also looked at ten inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- the school's systems for ensuring that all students achieve as well they should
- teachers' planning for the wide age and ability range
- how school managers and governors promote school improvement.

## Information about the school

All students have a statement of special educational needs. The range of needs identified is very wide, including: speech and language; social, emotional and behavioural; moderate learning; severe learning; autistic spectrum and specific learning difficulties. The number of students on the autistic spectrum has risen significantly since the last inspection. A minority also have additional mobility and medical needs. Almost half of the students are White British and nearly a quarter are of Black African or Caribbean ethnicity. The school is planning to relocate within three years with a planned reduction in roll.

In recent years, the school has gained several awards for its work, including Healthy School status and the Sportsmark Award.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Highshore is a good school that strives to realise its aim of 'working together to achieve our best'. It meets the increasingly complex needs of the students well to ensure they make good academic progress in all areas of the curriculum.

Academic achievement is a strong focus for all staff and this enables the students to make good progress across the curriculum. The achievement of some students in art is outstanding. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as a result of the school's aim to maximise their personal development and independence. Students form good relationships with adults and believe that their views are taken seriously, for example, in the school council's contribution to the design and development of the community wildlife garden. Students are well cared for and feel safe. Their attendance is good which indicates they are happy to be at school, as do their smiles on entering the building. They develop an excellent understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle, for example, they make healthy choices at mealtimes and take a full part in all physical activities on the timetable. A recent road safety initiative enables all to feel more confident when travelling independently. All school leavers go on to further education, employment or training.

The quality of teaching is good, expectations of students are typically high and lessons offer genuine challenge. The staff apply their specialist knowledge very well in a range of subjects, and particularly in English and the creative arts. There is also good support for students' additional needs in literacy. Occasionally, staff give the students tasks that do not take sufficient account of their prior learning which results in slower progress. The curriculum has many strengths and several departments work very well together to ensure a strong creative element, for example, the art, music and drama collaboration for the school production of 'The Pied Piper'. Personal, social, health and citizenship education and careers-related programmes are strengths. The school is conscious of the need to consider ways of enabling students on school transport to access the exciting programme of extra-curricular activities. The welfare of students and their families is extremely well supported by the school and its partnership with external agencies.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development needed to drive improvement. The school has improved since the last inspection on many fronts, for example, there is a wider range of accreditation and improved behaviour management that has resulted in a marked decrease in fixed-term exclusions. Monitoring of teaching and learning has improved, although senior managers recognise the need for increased support to deal with identified weaknesses, especially in teachers consistently matching lessons to the needs of pupils. Self-evaluation at all levels is good and the school has a good capacity to improve further. The only relative weakness is that

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senior managers currently do not make best use of assessment information to evaluate how well different groups of students are doing. Governors have relevant skills for their committee work where they provide support and challenge to the school's managers. They also gain a good understanding of the school through first-hand visits.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of teaching that is at least good by identifying more clearly the key strengths and weaknesses in teaching that emerge from monitoring lessons and particularly, the match of work to students' abilities.
- Extend the analysis of data to keep a continuous check on the attainment and progress of different groups of students.
- Consider ways in which all students can take part in the after-school programmes.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students make good academic progress from a very wide range of starting points. All receive external accreditation for their achievements, including entry level qualifications and GCSE. Some students achieve good passes in art GCSE which represents outstanding achievement. Where such accreditation is not appropriate, students take other courses leading to Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards. These recognised awards prepare the students well for moving on to colleges of further education. In lessons observed by inspectors the students made good progress in literacy, numeracy and creative skills.

Students make outstanding progress in aspects of their personal development, particularly in their social development, confidence and independence. They readily talk of their achievements and express their views through the school council which enables them to contribute to their school community and beyond, for example, liaising with a local wildlife trust to design an outdoor area adjacent to the school. Their artwork is displayed in the community and school drama performances are well attended.

As a result of thoughtful admission and transfer arrangements they settle in well and successfully move from one stage of their education to the next. The behaviour of students is good in lessons and around the school. Breaks including lunchtimes are social occasions with many friendships evident. Occasionally, some students exhibit challenging behaviour that interferes with their learning, but the majority continue with their studies and learning resumes promptly following effective intervention by staff. The prevailing atmosphere in school is harmonious where respect for others is the norm. The students feel safe and know they have a trusted member of staff to talk over problems. They hold positive views about their school, especially the regular residential journeys that sometimes include foreign travel. An ex-student who mentors current students on work experience commented, 'It's thanks to the school that I'm able to talk to you now with confidence and hold down my job.'

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

**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

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | *        |
| 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        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 2        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>1</b> |

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is effective in meeting the needs of the very wide range of abilities in the school. Staff have relevant levels of subject expertise appropriate to the curriculum provided. The vast majority of staff enjoy excellent relationships with students and have their best interests at heart. Teaching assistants play a central role in the learning of students and several take on teaching responsibilities and some are training to become qualified teachers. Typically, expectations for students' work are high, for example, in English and art. Occasionally, this is not the case where students are given tasks that are too simple and fail to build upon their prior learning. Sometimes, well-meaning adults intervene too early in learning and prevent students learning from mistakes. Teachers assess students' progress well and generally use this knowledge effectively to plan the next steps in learning. Specialist teaching for students with specific reading difficulties is very effective and enables them to make good progress in literacy and other areas of the curriculum.

The curriculum has good emphasis on the basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Creativity is evident throughout the school and practical experience prepares the students well for life after school. School awards in relation to sport and healthy eating underline the importance attached to the students' well-being. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of

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

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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extra-curricular activities. The majority of students experience at least one residential school journey which aids their personal development. Frequent use is made of the community for learning, in addition to bringing the community into school, for example, drama groups and 'Zoolab' where the students gain first-hand experience of exotic creatures. Preparation for the world of work and further education is a major part of the curriculum for the older students. However, opportunities are missed to access work experience in Year 10 despite some students being sufficiently mature to gain benefit.

Overwhelmingly parents feel that their children receive high quality support at the school. Clearly targeted interventions, for example, dyslexia support, are provided when appropriate and this has a clear impact on students' achievement. Annual reviews of statements and procedures, including those for looked after children, are comprehensive and include students and their families. These meetings are well attended by parents and carers and indicate the value they attach to the school's provision. Highly qualified counselling and careers staff based at the school also make a very effective contribution to students' emotional and economic well-being. Invariably all students who leave school go on to further education, employment or training which is a strong endorsement of the holistic support they receive.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The senior leadership team and other leaders and managers share a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to help the school improve. They know this by monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and planning throughout the school. Timely support is provided where necessary and senior managers acknowledge that additional support is required to bring all teaching up to the quality evident in the majority of lessons. Subject leaders evaluate their own areas and report to governors on a regular basis. Although teachers' assessments of students' achievements inform classroom practice, the analysis of assessment data to track the progress of different groups of students is underdeveloped. The professional development programme is targeted to match the school's priorities for improvement, such as increasing staff expertise in teaching students on the autistic spectrum. The school works extensively and effectively in partnership with many other professionals and agencies. The school recognises the importance of parents as partners and has recently appointed a member of staff for family liaison to improve engagement with

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parents. Significant time has been given to the school's planned relocation by senior managers to ensure that all stakeholders are fully consulted. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in all respects and this has resulted in a significant fall in the number of fixed-term exclusions. Equality of opportunity is promoted well throughout school life, however, few students on organised daily transport can access after-school programmes in the same way as independent travellers.

Governors have a relevant range of expertise and experience to offer good levels of challenge to the school's management. For example, they make focused visits to lessons and report their findings to the governing body. Safeguarding regulations and duties are fully met, and arrangements for inter-agency working are well established and very effective.

The school makes an outstanding contribution to the promotion of community cohesion through its work with local schools, a church youth project and community theatre groups, which reflect the multicultural environment it serves. Strong international links are also embedded in the life of the school through its residential journeys to Holland and fund raising for local and international charities. A comprehensive audit of these aspects enables managers to evaluate its effectiveness. Financial matters are well managed and effective deployment of resources ensures good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

The sixth form was a pilot project at the time of the last inspection and has recently become a permanent part of the school's provision with its own budget. It serves the



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needs of students who are not deemed quite ready to transfer to local colleges of further education or training. Essentially it is a one year course, although in exceptional circumstances, students may attend for up to two years. The ethos of this provision is the same as in the main school but with an increased emphasis on the development of independence in a range of settings. The quality of teaching is good and relationships between staff and students are age-appropriate with suitably high expectations for independence. The sixth formers make good progress and achieve success through a broad curriculum that includes two ASDAN programmes: 'Towards Independence' and the 'Residential Challenge'. Relevant community experiences include part-time attendance at a local college of further education and work experience. Furthermore, well established working relationships with school staff and external agencies are effective in ensuring a smooth transition to further education, employment or training.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:                           |          |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form        | 2        |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form     | 2        |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form    | 2        |

## Views of parents and carers

Ten parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. This represents less than one-tenth of the school's families. In their responses to the questionnaires, the very large majority of parents and carers were unanimously positive about the school and its impact on their children's learning and well-being. They felt that the extra-curricular visits and overall care were particular strengths and believed the school met individual needs well. Inspection evidence concurs with these views, especially those related to the care, guidance and support provided by the school for pupils and their families.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highshore 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 ten completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 126 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 6              | 60 | 4     | 40 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 5              | 50 | 5     | 50 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 6              | 60 | 4     | 40 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 5              | 50 | 5     | 50 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 4              | 40 | 6     | 60 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 4              | 40 | 5     | 50 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 3              | 30 | 7     | 70 | 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) | 5              | 50 | 3     | 30 | 1        | 10 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 6              | 60 | 4     | 40 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 5              | 50 | 4     | 40 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 4              | 40 | 5     | 50 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 5              | 50 | 5     | 50 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 6              | 60 | 4     | 40 | 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 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.**



27 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Highshore School, Peckham, London SE15 5BB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We spent a couple of days looking at everything that was going on in, and out of, the classroom and you will have seen us making lots of notes and talking to many people, including the school council. We judge that Highshore is a good school.

We saw many of the good things that go on in school and a few things that we thought should be improved. Your teachers do a good job, although sometimes the work you get is not quite what you need. Despite this you make good progress. You have a good range of lessons that eventually lead you to taking examinations and these will help you when you leave school. Your after-school clubs are really good, although those of you on school buses miss out on most of them.

You behave well and we were glad to see how well you get on together. You have a good understanding of healthy eating and take part in many exciting activities, including lots of sport and residential trips. We were very impressed by your creative talents, especially your artwork and hope your production of 'The Pied Piper' is a huge success. You told us that you feel very safe, and the school is really careful to make sure you are kept safe and protected. It is clear that you become much more confident as you get older and this helps you when leave school. The staff have been working on planning for your new building, but we think you make good use of what you have at the moment. The headteacher, senior managers and governors want to make the school as good as they can for you. We are sure you will do your best by working hard.

In order for them to make the school even better we have asked them to:

- make sure you are given work in all lessons that is just right for you so it is not too hard or too easy
- make better use of what they know about your progress so they can check that everyone is doing as well they can
- think of ways in which school-bus students can take part in the wonderful after-school activities.

Yours sincerely

Greg Sorrell

Lead inspector

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