

Claremont High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101557
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	335749
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Gill Close

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1491
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Zac Arif
Headteacher	Terry Molloy
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2010
School address	Claremont Avenue Harrow HA3 0UH
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. They observed 43 lessons taught by 41 teachers, and held meetings with students, staff, parents, governors and some of the school's partners. Their observations of the school's work included registrations, assembly, support sessions and extra-curricular activities. They looked at records of students' attainment and progress, improvement planning, self-evaluation, lesson monitoring documents, policies, exclusion data and attendance figures. They also evaluated questionnaire responses from 226 parents and carers, 933 students and 65 staff.

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

- the consistency of students' progress across key stages and the degree of any improvement for current students
- the quality of teaching and its impact on learning and progress
- students' progress and outcomes in the sixth form
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in identifying and acting on weaknesses and driving improvement.

Information about the school

Students at Claremont High School come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds with half of them being of Indian heritage. Over two thirds speak a first language other than English, of whom 50 are at early stages of learning English. Fewer students than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the main ones being dyslexia and behavioural, emotional and social needs. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national figure.

The school has held specialist status since 2001 in performing arts, since 2006 in mathematics and computing, and since 2007 in applied learning. The school has received the International School Award, Investors in People Award and Artsmark.

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

Claremont High School is outstanding. It delivers an excellent quality of education because it has enabled students to reach high standards during recent years through making good progress from their starting points, so their achievement is outstanding. It also supports students extremely well to develop excellent personal qualities and feel very safe. Students care about each other and get on well together. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. Students very much enjoy coming to school and have particularly high attendance. They like the breadth of courses and of extra-curricular activities, especially in sports and performing arts. The rich, vibrant curriculum provides students with a wide range of subjects and qualification pathways that is extremely well matched to their needs and promotes high attainment. Outstanding care, guidance and support help students, including those who are vulnerable, to reach high levels of attendance and attainment. The school's specialisms make a major impact on the range of opportunities and students' success. They also contribute to the excellent links that smooth the transition from primary school. Outstanding commitment to partnerships successfully enhances provision, care and professional development.

Students reach significantly above-average levels of attainment overall and in English and mathematics. Through good teaching and hard work, students learn well and make good progress. Some teaching is outstanding and enthuses students, but there are occasions when learning is slower because activities do not meet everyone's needs, encourage thinking, require participation or develop independence.

Leaders have a relentless focus on raising attainment. They successfully support target groups and adapt courses to ensure students meet the challenging and increasingly high targets the school has set. Tracking of individual students' progress leads to particularly effective intervention in Year 11. Through new data systems the school is introducing greater consistency across key stages and subjects; it recognises the need for monitoring the progress of groups more efficiently. An excellent focus on raising attendance, especially of those with substantial absence, has led to improvement and figures that are much better than average. Staff are highly committed to the school and share a strong drive for improvement. Leaders at all levels regularly make accurate evaluations of outcomes and identify appropriate actions that lead to improvement. Nevertheless, some evaluations have not used the range of available information critically enough to pinpoint areas for development as early as they might. The many effective steps taken to secure improvement and the systems in place give the school outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' progress through raising teaching quality so that more lessons:
 - involve students in exciting participatory activities
 - challenge all students and extend their higher-level thinking skills
 - build independence in learning, self-assessment and understanding of how to improve.
- Accelerate improvement by using data on performance and other outcomes more rigorously at all levels to self-challenge, so that:
 - intervention is more timely and consistent
 - outcomes for groups are monitored more systematically.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Learning in lessons is good. Students make good progress because teaching is good and they are very diligent in lessons and homework. In some of the lessons where the activities did not challenge all students, learning was weaker, particularly for higher-attainers. In Year 11 the thorough tracking and intervention programme also contributes to students' good overall progress. It plays a part in their stronger progress during Key Stage 4 than the other two key stages.

Since the last inspection students have reached high standards at the end of Key Stage 4, having joined the school with above-average attainment. The school has successfully raised attainment so that all large groups reach levels significantly above average for their groups nationally, with girls attaining more highly than boys. A focus on vulnerable groups has raised the attainment and progress of those known to be eligible for free school meals or receiving school action support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and White British and Pakistani groups. The school's data show that all groups of current Year 11 students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are on track to reach standards well above national averages for similar groups. The sensitive support for students with behavioural, social and emotional needs enables them to make similar progress to their peers. The school's data show that current students at early stages of learning English are expected to make good progress. The very inclusive nature of the school is demonstrated in the significantly above-average standards of the lowest attainers, with 99% of students attaining at least five GCSE grades A* to G in 2009. At the same time, the proportions of students gaining GCSE grades A* and A in English, mathematics and triple science are high.

In 2009 students' progress improved overall and in English it is good. Following a dip in science results, the school has introduced a BTEC course for some students and made changes to its monitoring and intervention, with records showing improved progress. Students' progress varies across subjects at each key stage.

Students make many excellent contributions to the community, such as through the governors' student committee, raising funds for local charities, and acting as mentors or

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sports leaders. The school council contributes to decision making, for example on computer systems and food, but misses opportunities to involve other students. Students have an excellent understanding of how to promote their physical, mental and emotional health. They adopt healthy lifestyles and encourage others to do so, but some would like more help with this. Many are extremely active, although a few spend less than two hours per week on physical activity. The extremely good behaviour of the vast majority of students makes an excellent contribution to their successful learning. Students who have difficulty in maintaining this standard are improving their behaviour. Students' high levels of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, excellent attendance, strong aspirations and determination prepare them extremely well for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Most teaching is at least good, but the quality varies, particularly when classes do not have their usual teacher. In the best lessons teachers use their good subject knowledge and assessment of the students' performance to plan activities that meet their differing

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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needs. Engaging group work actively involves all students and questioning ably extends their learning. Students make assessments of how well they and their peers are meeting targets, and know what they need to do to improve. Their good relationships with staff and excellent attitudes to work help them to make at least good progress. In some of the weaker lessons, students do not make such good progress because activities do not meet their needs well enough or develop their ability to think and make decisions. Assessment does not involve them fully enough or show them clearly how to improve. Sometimes students are passive because they spend too long listening to teachers to be able to develop their practical skills or independence. In these lessons behaviour sometimes slips, but most students work hard and so keep up their progress in the long term.

The outstanding curriculum is adapted each year to meet needs more effectively, and ensure that a very high proportion of students obtain qualifications at Key Stage 4 that prepare them well for the future. Some innovative options in Year 9, including vocational courses, enable students to start early on this. The subject specialisms enrich the curriculum, and provide students with opportunities for a high level of success, the strength of the performing arts provision being recognised through the award of Artsmark. Students participate eagerly in high-quality music and drama productions. Strong curricular and pastoral links with primary schools and introductory activities for Year 7 students provide a smooth transition. Provision is customised effectively for those at very early stages of learning English, and is developing for those at later stages. Interventions for vulnerable students are matched closely to their needs, including literacy support that has assisted students in raising their aspirations and succeeding. Enrichment through flexible learning days provides excellent preparation for the future, as do life skills sessions. Staff devote much energy to delivering an extensive range of extra-curricular provision, including a variety involving physical activity, in which participation is high.

Extremely well-targeted support enables students to reach high standards and participate in a wide range of activities. Staff help vulnerable students exceptionally well to overcome difficulties, maintain good attendance, raise literacy and numeracy levels and complete courses successfully. This enables a very high proportion of students to go on to further or higher education. Advice on courses is focused very effectively to inform decisions at transition points and raise aspirations. Many students praise the effort that the majority of teachers make to look after them and say they are always ready to help. Effective communication with parents, such as through text messages, and close work with partners have contributed to the high and improved attendance. The number of exclusions has fallen since the last inspection. Although sometimes issues were not picked up at the earliest stage, the systems for working with students who find it difficult to behave well have improved and are now making a real difference. Students report that incidents of bullying are dealt with well, but there are some inconsistencies in the way behaviour is managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

A large senior leadership team works very effectively with middle leaders and staff to achieve an inclusive, harmonious community, drive up the quality of provision and improve outcomes. All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire indicated they were proud to work at the school, shared its sense of purpose and were involved in what it is trying to achieve. The Investors in People Award reflects the strength of the systems in place. Professional development is targeted well to raise the quality of leadership and teaching. Strategic actions and structural changes have effectively improved provision where weaknesses had been identified. The school has rightly identified the use of data as an area for development. This is needed to improve consistency and transparency in tracking individuals' progress and participation, and for more efficient management information on groups of students. Evaluation of most areas is accurate, and draws effectively on reviews by external consultants, but sometimes opportunities for self-challenge are missed and lead to generous judgements. Evaluation of teaching is carried out by a range of senior and middle leaders and includes students' views. While most judgements are accurate, the generosity of others reduces opportunities to identify and support further areas for improvement. Governors show a determination in challenging and supporting the school to improve, and play a key part in strategic decisions. They obtain views from students, parents and staff. They are actively extending their expertise and systems for gathering direct evidence.

The school takes effective steps to work closely with parents of vulnerable students and those at risk of underachieving, provides clear information in reports and is using an increasing range of ways of collecting views. There is room for greater access to information on and discussion of students' progress. The good safeguarding procedures include strengths in training, risk assessment and the use of new technologies for access to data held by other agencies. The strong ethos of equal opportunities underpins effective plans and interventions that are narrowing gaps in outcomes and participation for minority ethnic groups, those at early stages of learning English and those eligible for free school meals. The school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well, especially through its subject specialisms. Students celebrate their diverse range of cultures through various events, work closely together in productions and teams, and show a deep sensitivity to others. Their understanding of differences is reflected in the comment from one student, 'We are a smaller world here.' Students work with the local hospice and have strong links with nearby special, Jewish and Japanese schools. A partnership with a South African school and township involving exchanges contributed to

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gaining the International School Award.

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	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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Students very much enjoy being part of the sixth form and participating in the many activities it offers. They mature into responsible young people who make excellent contributions to the community, such as by providing coaching for younger students and ICT training for adults. They learn well in lessons as a result of good teaching and study hard for homework, so make good progress overall. In recent years students have made good progress in some subjects, but this has not been consistent across all courses. The school's data show that current students are on track for improved progress in areas of previous weakness. A consistent strength is the large number of students who take mathematics A level and do well. There is a high rate of progression to further and higher education, informed by clear guidance and collaboration with many partners. Students praise the support from staff that helps them deal with difficulties and complete their courses successfully. The range of academic and vocational courses, strong citizenship provision and new International Baccalaureate programme, that will commence in September 2010, meet students' needs. Students know their target grades and what they need to do to improve. Monitoring and intervention have raised their progress but vary between subjects, and systems do not readily identify the progress of groups of students. The school has rightly recognised the need for improvement in the sixth form and has taken appropriate steps, including the strengthening of leadership structures, that have already raised students' progress and attendance. There are clear plans and a shared vision for further improvement.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
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

A very large majority of parents and carers are happy with the school, and consider that their children enjoy it and feel safe. Most parents and carers agree with most of the statements in the questionnaire. A few want greater help to support their child's learning, more information about their child's progress and more account taken of their ideas and suggestions. Inspectors find that communication with parents is good, but there are some inconsistencies and room for improvement. A few parents disagree that the school helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle. This view is also expressed by some of the students who responded to the student questionnaire. Inspectors find that the school's wide range of provision enables students to understand extremely well and adopt healthy lifestyles, with one third of them taking school lunch. The school recognises the need to investigate in more depth the reasons underlying this response and act on them. A few parents consider that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors find that the vast majority of students behave exceptionally well and that systems for improving the behaviour of the small number of other students are making an increasingly strong impact.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Claremont High 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 226 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1491 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	35	137	61	8	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	81	36	126	56	12	5	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	28	126	56	30	13	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	26	141	62	23	10	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	51	23	141	62	28	12	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	22	120	53	45	20	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	17	141	62	42	19	1	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)	39	17	149	66	17	8	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	16	156	69	24	11	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	25	121	54	30	13	8	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	12	143	63	33	15	5	2
The school is led and managed effectively	67	30	137	61	15	7	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	77	34	132	58	13	6	3	1

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.



14 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Claremont High school, Kenton, Harrow, HA3 0UH

Thank you for your very warm welcome when we visited your school and for telling us about it. We found that your school is outstanding because it helps you to reach high standards by making good progress. This prepares you extremely well for the future.

You get on very well with each other and help out a great deal in school and the community. You and your parents told us that you particularly enjoy coming to school and feel very safe. Your attendance is very high. We found that the vast majority of you behave extremely well, which helps you to learn, but sometimes behaviour is not as good. In questionnaires some of you disagreed that the school helped you to be healthy, but when we spoke to you, we found that you know exceptionally well how to stay healthy and take part in many physical activities, although only some of you eat school lunch. You can help by explaining how the school could help you to be even healthier.

You enjoy the excellent range of subjects at school and opportunities for extra-curricular activities, such as drama, music and sports. The good teaching and your hard work help you to make good progress. Most lessons challenge and interest you, but in some the work does not meet your needs or involve you in activities. We have asked the school to make sure that lessons are exciting and active, and develop your thinking and independence. You can help by thinking hard and assessing how well you are doing and how to improve.

The headteacher, leaders and other staff have worked together extremely well to improve the school. We have asked them to use data more efficiently so improvement continues even more quickly. I wish you every success in school and in helping it to improve.

Yours sincerely

Gill Close

Her Majesty's Inspector

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