

Hornsey School for Girls

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102153
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	335850
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Storey

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1361
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Christie
Headteacher	Carol Jones
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2007
School address	Inderwick Road London N8 9JF
Telephone number	020 83486191
Fax number	020 83401214
Email address	admin@hornseyschool.com

Age group	11–18
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Inspection number	335850

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They visited 32 lessons or parts of lessons, and 30 teachers were observed. Inspectors held discussions with groups of students, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's analysis of students' attainment and the progress they make, data on attendance and behaviour, evidence of leaders' monitoring and evaluation and plans for improvement, and reports from the local authority following their visits. Inspectors also evaluated questionnaire responses from 280 parents and carers and 68 students.

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

- the achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with behavioural, social and emotional needs
- how well the curriculum is tailored to students' different abilities and aspirations and the impact of the specialist subjects on outcomes for students
- teaching and learning in English and science
- improvements to the sixth form since the last inspection
- how well leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and help it to improve.

Information about the school

Students at Hornsey School for Girls come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are those of Black African heritage and those from a White background other than British and Black Caribbean. Over two-thirds of the students speak a first language other than English, although few are at an early stage of fluency in English. Mostly their first language is Turkish, Bengali or Somali, although in total over 60 different languages are represented. Many students travel to school from across the borough and the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is more than twice that found nationally. Almost 30% of students are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is higher than at the time of the last inspection and now above that found nationally. Most commonly, these students have moderate learning difficulties or behaviour, social and emotional needs.

The school has held specialist performing arts status since 2002 and a second specialism in humanities since 2007. It is also a Leading Edge school and has received a number of awards, including Healthy Schools, Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark and the International School Award.

The headteacher and two of the three deputy headteachers have been appointed since the last inspection. A Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, which has added a new library and reception area, information and communication technology resources, and refurbished the sixth form area, was being completed at the time of the inspection.

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

Hornsey School for Girls provides students with a satisfactory standard of education. It is a well-led, improving school which is well placed to achieve the ambitions it has for its future and, more importantly, for its students. Its specialist status is a strength.

Standards in the performing arts are generally above average and these subjects have a positive impact on students' personal development and well-being.

Standards at the end of Year 11 have largely been maintained since the last inspection. Year on year, the very large majority of students gain five or more passes at GCSE. Over 60% attain five or more A* to C grades and around half gain five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. However, it is because nationally standards have risen over the same period that attainment is now average rather than good. As the new senior team rightly identified, there have been a number of reasons why standards have reached a plateau. The curriculum was not fully meeting the needs of all students. On the face of it, girls had access to a wide choice of subjects and the opportunity to take a large number of courses. In reality, the qualifications on offer did not always meet the needs of the lower attaining students and many others found that they were overloaded. As a result, some girls dropped subjects or did not reach the levels they were capable of. The systems for tracking students' progress and setting targets were not rigorous enough. Both factors had also contributed to a reduction over time in the proportion of students reaching the highest levels. Nevertheless, for the majority of students, considering their starting points, their academic achievement is good. However, as senior managers have identified, the large majority of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities currently make satisfactory progress in their learning. As a result, achievement is satisfactory overall.

Over the past two years there has been what one member of staff described as a 'reorientation of moral purpose'. Senior leaders are determined that all girls reach their potential and are well equipped for their future education or career. A new curriculum was introduced in September 2009 at Key Stage 4. Different pathways are on offer, which are closely tailored to the needs of students of different abilities. The focus is now on quality not quantity of qualifications. There is evidence that this, together with actions taken to improve the quality of teaching, and improvements to the systems used to track how well students are doing, are having a positive impact on the progress they make. However, because these initiatives are relatively recent they require more time to take full effect. The quality of teaching and use of assessment are not yet strong enough to ensure that learning and progress are consistently good for all groups of students.

The sixth form is satisfactory. The quality of the provision largely mirrors that in the

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

main school because changes to the curriculum, teaching and assessment and tracking systems have been part of a whole-school approach. As in the main school, the initiatives put in place need more time to become fully embedded so have not yet had a demonstrable impact on raising students' achievement, which is currently satisfactory.

The school demonstrates that it is in a strong position to continue to improve through:

- accurate monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders, which lead to a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and focused plans for improvement
- senior leaders' recent proven success in tackling issues, including restructuring staffing to take forward improvement plans, and reducing a potentially large budget deficit
- its programme which is successfully developing middle leaders' skills in monitoring provision and outcomes at a departmental level
- the impact of its coaching programme on improving the quality of teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good teaching so that most students make good progress by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - use the information available on students' prior attainment and individual needs to match activities closely to the learning needs of students of different abilities, in particular those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with the potential to reach the highest levels
 - assess students' learning through questioning and dialogue during lessons, using the information to refocus teaching and to help students understand what they are learning
 - use marking effectively so that students understand what they are doing well and how to improve
 - ensure that there are more opportunities to develop independent learning skills and use of new technologies.
- Implement plans to develop the curriculum further, making the most of enrichment opportunities and cross-curricular links, so that it motivates and meets the needs and interests of all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In lessons, the large majority of students demonstrate positive attitudes to learning; they concentrate during whole-class sessions and apply themselves to the tasks set for them, even when teaching is not closely matched to their needs. When teaching is good, most students make good progress, know what they have achieved and what the next steps in their learning are.

The large majority of students make good progress over time. This includes the most vulnerable girls and those with a statement of special educational needs, who often

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

make good progress because they have additional targeted support either in class or groups. However, the large majority of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory, rather than good, progress in lessons and over time. For the most part, this is because teachers do not take their individual needs sufficiently into account when planning lessons. As a result, some students, often those with behaviour, social and emotional needs, do not always get on with the activities given to them. When students are off task, staff do not always use the best strategies to re-engage them. It is because learning and progress are satisfactory for this significant group that learning and progress overall are judged satisfactory rather than good at this point in time.

Most students say they feel safe in school and this was echoed by most parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire. Good behaviour in lessons and around school is the norm. Students know how to stay healthy and, through the specialism, all girls participate in an hour of dance each week in addition to two hours of physical education at Key Stage 3. The concerns students and parents raised about the provision of healthy food in school are being addressed through the students' participation in the recently established Healthy Food Forum.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Observations during the inspection confirm that teaching is often good. Good teaching is characterised by dialogue about learning, with activities planned to meet students' different needs and the use of a variety of strategies to stimulate thinking and generate enthusiasm. However, this is not yet the norm and the very aspects that are strengths in good lessons are sometimes missing from others. Teachers do not always plan to meet the needs of different abilities and a consequence is that the level of challenge for higher attainers is sometimes too low. Questioning is not consistently probing enough to check students' learning thoroughly during lessons. As a rule, marking is not detailed or regular enough to help students understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum has been adapted at Key Stage 4 this year, following consultation with students, staff and parents, to offer students a personalised programme to meet their needs. The school's plans include developing cross-curricular links and the use of enrichment activities to capture students' interests and enhance their motivation. The school's data indicate this is having a positive impact on students' progress and attendance in Year 10. The performing arts make a valuable contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through opportunities to address issues such as isolation and migration. Until the recent Building Schools for the Future programme, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum has been underdeveloped because of insufficient resources.

Students are well cared for and supported from the start. The performing arts specialism provides opportunities for primary pupils to get to know the school before they join. Students and their parents and carers have been thoroughly briefed about the curriculum changes and given good advice as to which pathway to follow. Strong pastoral support is effective in removing the barriers to learning that some students face. The school is very aware through its own analysis which groups of students have low attendance and there is evidence that intervention with some groups has brought about improvements.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff and governors share a clear vision for the school and have ensured through

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

consultation that most staff are clear what the school is trying to achieve and how it needs to improve.

Annual departmental reviews give senior and middle leaders a good picture of how the school is performing. Recent in-depth reviews in the core subjects and performing arts have developed the monitoring skills of middle leaders, and identified clearly what actions need to be taken to bring about further improvement. A combination of monitoring and support, and training for staff, has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and the use of assessment. The school's data show the success it has had with its coaching programme this year in improving teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science. Systems to track students' progress have been improved so that as well as focusing on students gaining a good pass in their GCSE examinations, they take account of the progress they should be making from Year 7 onwards.

A thread through the school's work is its commitment to equality and community cohesion. It monitors the achievement of different groups carefully, undertaking more detailed analysis where data indicate there may be issues relating to their progress. A detailed review of special educational needs provision has already identified the actions needed to improve progress for this group of students. A good range of activities, including daily 'community time' sessions in school and participation in events with other schools, promotes students' sense of their place in the world and understanding of different faiths and backgrounds.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. There are clear procedures for ensuring the safety of students, backed up by regular training for staff. The security of the site has been enhanced as part of the recent building works. Students are keenly aware how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations as a result of lessons that consider topics such as internet safety, drugs awareness and domestic violence.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3
---	----------

Sixth form

The focus in the sixth form until recently has been on choice from a breadth of options, rather than guidance to pathways best matched to students' needs. As a result, students have made satisfactory progress. In 2009, the A-level pass rate was 100%, although the proportion of students gaining an A or B grade was below average. There have been several changes of leadership in the sixth form since the last inspection, which has hindered development. Current leaders have evaluated strengths and weaknesses and put in place a range of strategies to improve achievement, including a new range of courses, interviews with students to guide choices and improving attendance. Coupled with the whole-school focus on improving the quality of teaching and systems for tracking students' progress, the quality of provision is improving and there is evidence that this is beginning to have a positive impact on students' progress. The completion of the building programme will enhance sixth form accommodation and resources, including access to ICT for independent learning.

Students' personal development is good. They demonstrate mature attitudes and make a strong contribution to the school and wider community through a range of activities such as peer leadership and fund raising. Support from external agencies helps prepare them for university and independent living.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

About 20% of parents and carers returned the questionnaire to the inspection team. Most feel that their child enjoys school and is safe and the inspection team agrees with them. However, the numbers agreeing with a number of other statements were lower and several parents added comments to explain their answers. As a result, inspectors paid particular attention to: the school's communication with parents and carers, including how the school takes account of their views and how they are helped to support their child's learning; how well the school meets individual needs; behaviour; and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. They found that there are some issues regarding meeting the individual needs of some students, but judged the other aspects raised as good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hornsey School for Girls 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 280 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,361 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	21	181	65	32	11	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	66	24	187	67	18	6	4	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	69	25	163	58	38	14	8	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	21	169	60	43	15	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	43	15	177	63	42	15	9	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	15	48	53	63	23	12	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	17	140	50	58	21	18	6
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)	57	20	158	56	32	11	8	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	13	163	58	59	21	8	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	19	152	54	47	17	16	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	16	134	48	60	21	20	7
The school is led and managed effectively	42	15	163	58	42	15	11	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	26	148	53	40	14	12	4

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.



1 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Hornsey School for Girls, London, N8 9JF

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and learnt a lot about Hornsey School for Girls from the discussions we had in meetings, lessons and around the school.

We found that the school gives you a satisfactory standard of education, that some aspects of its work are good and that the right things are in place to make it a really good school. These are some of the things we think it does well.

- Standards are above average in the performing arts subjects and they have a positive impact on your personal development and well-being.
- The large majority of you develop positive attitudes to learning and make good progress over time.
- You are well cared for and supported.

Of course there are things that can improve and we discussed these with your headteacher before we left. To help the school become even better we have said that the headteacher and other staff should:

- improve the proportion of good teaching so that most of you make good progress in your learning by: making better use of the information about your attainment and abilities to plan lessons; regularly assessing how well you are doing and helping you understand how you can improve; and ensuring that you have opportunities to develop independent learning skills and use new technologies
- implement plans to develop the curriculum, making the most of enrichment activities and links between subjects to motivate you and meet your needs and interests.

I am going to ask you to help in making these improvements. Good behaviour and attendance are important prerequisites for learning. Please keep up the good behaviour and try to improve your attendance!

Yours sincerely

Alison Storey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.