

Isleworth and Syon School for Boys

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102541
Local Authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	335922
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Carmen Rodney HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1009
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vanessa Smith
Headteacher	Euan Ferguson
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2006
School address	Ridgeway Road Isleworth TW7 5LJ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Altogether, 42 lessons were observed and 40 teachers seen. Inspectors also made shorter visits to classrooms to assess particular aspects of provision. Meetings were held with parents, groups of students, the chair of the curriculum committee and a range of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including information on strategies to raise attainment and various policies on community cohesion, safeguarding and equal opportunities. In addition, 79 questionnaires from parents and carers were returned as well as 15 from staff and 134 from students.

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

- students' progress during Key Stage 4, and in particular their progress in English and the school's work to improve outcomes in this subject
- how well the assessment system is used to improve achievement
- the effectiveness of the school's work to improve teaching since the last inspection
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in making and sustaining improvements.

Information about the school

Isleworth and Syon School for Boys is slightly larger than most secondary schools. Of its students, most are from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is high but few are at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. The school is oversubscribed, but the number of students joining or leaving it during the school year is above average. The school has enjoyed specialist sport status since 2003. The sixth form is part of a consortium and includes a small minority of female students. The school provides extended services and has gained a number of awards including an Artsmark and a Sports Partnership Mark. It has National Healthy School status and is an Investor in People organisation.

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

'My son loves school. He is proud of belonging to the community and receives the individual recognition that motivates him to achieve well.' 'The school recognises children's talents', 'great feedback' and 'there are boundaries and structures.'

These personal testimonies of parents and carers are appropriate because Isleworth and Syon School for Boys is indeed a good school. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in tackling the key areas for improvement. In particular, much has been done to improve teaching and, as a result, although their attainment is broadly average, students are making good progress from their below-average starting points. The school realises that difficulties with the recruitment of teachers have adversely affected students' rate of progress in English. English is a key priority for development and well-selected strategies are already leading to some improvement in students' performance.

Academic achievement has also been positively affected by the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support. The needs of students are carefully evaluated and support is tailored to their needs. Additionally, the good-quality curriculum and outstanding enrichment activities that include a wide range of sports and many other clubs ensure that provision is well adapted to meet the needs of students. For example, those with learning difficulties receive good-quality support and gifted and talented students are suitably stretched. This inclusive school knows the needs and personal circumstances of its students very well and uses this information exceptionally well to develop outstanding partnership work with parents and carers. Partnerships with a range of agencies and external providers have been strengthened through the consortium and extended services provision. These have a positive impact on students' well-being and their preparation for work or further education as well as on the staff's professional development. However, the school recognises that there is still more work to do to develop its work on community cohesion which extends beyond the immediate locality.

The specialist status is one of the main strengths of the school and is integral to its promotion of high aspiration. The school enjoys high rates of participation in sports locally, nationally and globally, and pioneers robust educational practice, for example, in monitoring and assessment and curriculum development.

Assessment data are analysed carefully and action taken to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to achieve. For instance, the commitment to narrowing the attainment gap is seen in the effective use of assessment data to identify and support small groups of White English boys and those of African and Caribbean heritage who are at risk of underperforming. While assessment is good, day-to-day marking is of

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inconsistent quality and students are not always clear about what they need to do next. Improvements have been possible because the school is well led and the culture of aspiration has been clearly communicated to staff. Senior leaders' understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses are incisive and based on accurate self-evaluation. As a result, there is a solid foundation for sustained further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' academic progress by ensuring that:
 - teaching is consistently good in English and motivates students to achieve well
 - all subjects contribute to the development of good literacy skills as an integral part of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of marking so that it is detailed and supports students' understanding of how to improve their work.
- Develop the national and international dimensions of community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The vast majority of students enjoy learning and respond enthusiastically when challenged. In a few lessons, however, a very small minority of students distract others because the teaching does not engage them. In most lessons observed by inspectors, behaviour was good or better; students' relationships with each other and with staff are a strength. On the whole, students strive to do well and respond positively to group work and opportunities to learn independently.

Attainment in GCSE examinations has risen each year since the last inspection. In 2009 79% of students achieved five A* to C grades. While results in mathematics were above average last year, staffing instability in the English department depressed the percentage of students achieving five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. As a result, effective steps have been taken to address the issues and externally validated assessment records suggest that results will rise in 2010. Specialist support ensures that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups as well as children in care make similar progress to their peers.

Safety concerns are well met and students feel safe in the school; they know the pastoral system very well and are confident about seeking advice and support when necessary. The school fosters a strong sense of community; students respect each other and the relationship between different ethnic groups is harmonious. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and incidents of bullying and racism are rare. This has increased students' good moral, social and cultural development. The sports specialism is used very well to promote healthy lifestyles; in particular, talents are nurtured and sportsmanship is well developed. Students enjoy the many opportunities to mature and develop good leadership skills within the local community. They have responded positively to steps taken to improve attendance, which is above average. The

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school makes a good contribution to ensuring that students gain good life skills and can go on to education, training or employment.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' productive relationships with students and their very good subject expertise and understanding of how to engage students contribute to the good pace of most lessons. Well-structured planning with timed activities is used effectively to consolidate and develop learning. Teaching is well balanced in relation to practical and written work and students are suitably challenged to meet or exceed their target grades. Teachers use open-ended questions to develop thinking, there is good use of information and communication technology and success criteria are explored with students to help them understand what they have to do. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning is no more than satisfactory. Here there are missed opportunities to extend communication skills and work is neither carefully matched to individual needs nor sufficiently challenging. Effective assessment systems underpin learning well and include peer assessment and self-assessment.

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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The curriculum provides a good range of courses and is adapted well to meet the needs of students. It is routinely reviewed and developed to enhance students' skills. For example, the innovative integrated course in Years 7 and 8 contributes to students developing a wide range of learning and personal skills and helps Year 7 students' transition from primary school.

Exceptionally good care, incorporating a house system and strong links with external services, means that the needs of students are very well met. Students receive targeted support and know they can trust staff and turn to them for support and advice.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels support the school's motto and commitment to teamwork and they share a determination to raise attainment by increasing accountability and using data more robustly to track progress. Intervention strategies are used effectively to improve teaching so that students can make good progress. Well-considered development planning and self-evaluation ensure that priorities and goals are carefully identified and can be achieved within a given time scale. Although a few middle managers are new to their roles, their capacity to manage is increasing through training and development. Governors are well informed and fulfil their statutory duties in all respects. They challenge the school and seek out information and answers while using their expertise to support the school's work and shape, and monitor its direction.

The school seeks to dismantle barriers to achievement and tackle discrimination and ensures that parents and carers are well informed about their children's progress and the school's work. Safeguarding requirements are very robust and are systematically implemented and kept under review. The school knows its community very well and links are strong, but plans to promote all aspects of community cohesion are under-developed. Improving outcomes for students and the efficient use of resources mean that the school provides good value for money.

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

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 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	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The strengths identified at the last inspection have been sustained with significant improvements in mathematics and physics where students' progress is outstanding and results are generally above average. Sixth form students reach broadly average standards of attainment and, given their starting points, this represents good progress overall. Students' achievement is linked to good teaching from knowledgeable and experienced teachers. However, at times students who lack confidence are over-directed by teachers. Teachers use good systems to monitor students' progress and appropriate interventions are made to support their learning and to enable them to make the best possible progress.

Within the consortium, students derive many benefits from a curriculum that offers them a wide choice of courses at different levels. This is being broadened further to include additional Diploma courses at the start of the next academic year. Care and guidance are well planned and begin before students enter the sixth form. Consequently, students settle and adapt well to the new and more independent study arrangements. They appreciate the good academic advice and pastoral support provided throughout their studies, particularly in relation to further or higher education and/or employment. Sixth formers take positions of responsibilities as sports coaches and ambassadors in the school and local community, becoming successful role models and mentors for younger students.

There is a clear vision for the future of the sixth form as a focal point for study within the community that it serves. The sixth form remains a successful centre to which over two thirds of students transfer at the end of Year 11.

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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

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire fully endorsed all that the school provides for their children. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about how well the school promotes a healthy lifestyle, how well it meets their child's needs and the extent it takes account of the concerns and suggestions of parents and carers. These reservations are not validated by the inspection evidence. Rather, personal testimonies, including letters from parents, provide a positive view of these matters as well as of other aspects of provision. This is further confirmed by the majority of parents and carers who completed the school survey in November 2009 and the following comment from a parent typically conveys what most said about their children's needs being met, 'My child with a statement of special educational needs has made excellent progress.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Isleworth and Syon School for Boys 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1006 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	36	45	59	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	46	40	53	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	40	44	58	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	35	43	56	7	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	37	46	62	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	40	39	53	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	30	42	57	10	14	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)	22	31	45	64	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	29	45	60	8	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	43	40	52	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	25	50	65	7	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	48	39	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	49	35	47	3	4	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



13 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Isleworth and Syon School for Boys, TW7 5LJ

Thank you for taking part in the inspection of your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and participation in different activities. This is a short summary of the main inspection findings.

The inspection team agrees with your parents and carers that you attend a good school. The school has improved in many ways since the last inspection because the senior leaders have a vision for all of you to 'achieve and succeed'. The school is well led and this is reflected in the improved results. The quality of your care, guidance and support is outstanding and the target-setting and review days ensure that your performance does not slip.

Teaching is good and there is a sharp focus on helping you to make good progress. The majority of you behave well and cooperate with your teachers. The good relationships with staff and among the student body contribute to your learning because you all work very well together. You enjoy attending school and this is evident in your good attendance. It is clear that you all benefit from the outstanding enrichment activities on offer, especially in sports. You also relish the opportunities to develop sporting and leadership skills.

The inspection team identified three main areas of the school that need improving. We have asked the school to ensure that English results improve each year, that when your work is marked, teachers do so carefully and give you detailed comments for improvement, and that the school implements plans to help you to learn about, and contribute to, other communities across the United Kingdom and globally.

You are rightly proud of your school and I am sure that you will continue to attend regularly and work with your teachers to make it an even better place.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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