

# Cheam High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103010
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sutton
<b>Inspection number</b>	336000
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Angela Corbett HMI

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1909
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Rosemary Satchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Allott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Chatsworth Road Sutton SM3 8PW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 35 lessons taught by different teachers and made two visits to tutor groups and one to an assembly. They also conducted four 'learning walks', three of which focused on the quality of marking and assessment. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including policies, data and analyses, records of the school's monitoring, governors' minutes and questionnaires completed by 114 staff, 189 students and 300 parents and carers.

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

- the quality of teaching and the progress of all students
- the impact of the curriculum and of care, guidance and support on students' outcomes
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in raising achievement
- the contribution made by the school's partnerships and specialisms
- the effectiveness of the sixth form.

## Information about the school

Cheam is a very large school that gained specialist status in languages in 2003 and in applied learning and as a Training School in 2008. Students join the school from a wide range of primary schools within the local area. Most students are of White British heritage, although many other ethnic groups are represented. Very few students are at an early stage of speaking English. Eligibility for free school meals, as known, is much lower than average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average with an above-average proportion having a statement of special educational needs. The sixth form includes a unit for students with moderate learning difficulties, known as the PEP (post-16 entry-level programme) group. The school has achieved a number of awards including National Healthy Schools Status and Sportsmark.

**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

Cheam High School is an outstanding school that raises the aspirations of students so they make outstanding progress and have high academic attainment. A significant factor in Cheam's success is the respect that all members of the school show to each other. Staff at all levels place students' academic achievement, personal development and well-being at the forefront of their work. This results in a highly inclusive, purposeful and collegiate atmosphere in which students, teachers and other adults thrive.

Students are overwhelmingly positive about the school and say they receive good teaching, are able to participate in a wide range of activities and feel exceptionally safe. Their enjoyment of school life is reflected in their high attendance. Parents and carers also have high regard for the school. Amongst many positive comments, one said, 'Both my children enjoy attending Cheam High School and are very enthusiastic about lessons and the good quality of teaching.'

The outstanding curriculum is regularly reviewed and honed to ensure that the needs of all students are met regardless of their interests and abilities. This, coupled with exceptional care, guidance and support and good teaching, ensures that all students make good progress and most make outstanding progress. Teachers are skilled practitioners and there is much excellent classroom practice, although, in some instances, the focus is more on teaching practices than on the learning. Teachers, very carefully, plan their lessons to meet the differing needs of students; however, in some lessons, more-able students are not always sufficiently challenged or encouraged to become independent learners.

The school's three specialisms have a significant impact on the work of the school: there is exceptionally high participation in languages, a rapid expansion in applied subjects in the curriculum and the quality of professional development is extremely high for all staff. The language and training specialisms, in particular, reach out into the local community and schools as well as building strong links with teacher training providers at national level. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in sustaining and improving the quality of teaching. There is no complacency at any level. The headteacher, ably supported by a dedicated team of senior and middle leaders, continually, seeks ways of improving aspects of school life, with a very high priority given to teaching and learning. An embedded cycle of self-review ensures that appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified and incorporated into development plans. This, together with the school's track record, demonstrates its outstanding capacity for further improvement.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding lessons, building on the excellent classroom practice which has already been developed, by:
  - enabling teachers to focus more on developing the highest quality of learning
  - fostering students' independent learning and, by doing so, accelerate the progress of the higher-attainers '
  - maximising the innovative and exciting use of the interactive whiteboards that are installed in all classrooms

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Students' attainment has been consistently above average and has risen year-on-year against almost all indicators. In particular, an exceptionally high proportion achieve five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE with very little variation between subjects and groups of students. Attainment on entry is broadly average and middle- and lower-ability students make outstanding progress and higher-attaining students make good and sometimes outstanding progress.

Learning in most of the lessons observed by inspectors was good or better. In all the lessons observed, students were keen to participate and benefited from a wide variety of tasks in extremely positive learning environments where they felt confident to ask questions and seek advice.

Students are very polite and friendly and they get on together extremely well. Their behaviour, both in lessons and around school, is good and contributes well to their very positive attitudes to school. They also make a good contribution to the school and wider community, by raising funds for charity and taking on a good range of responsibilities, such as buddies and arts and sports leaders. Active year and school councils help to improve school life. For example, they have successfully requested healthier food options in the dining room. This, together with good participation in the numerous sporting opportunities offered, reflects their good adoption of healthy lifestyles. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives, developing excellent workplace and basic skills, including those in information and communication technology (ICT).

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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.

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is good. It is outstanding when teachers provide students with interesting activities which engage them and keep them highly motivated. Lesson planning is detailed and systematically builds on assessment information so that work is pitched at exactly the right level. As a result, students' learning moves along at a good pace. However, there are missed opportunities, often at the start of some lessons, for independent learning to be accelerated, in particular for the most-able students. Teachers' subject knowledge is a clear strength because it gives students confidence and this means they feel able to ask questions, safe in the knowledge of an expert reply. Teachers mark students' work regularly and there are many examples of helpful comments, which inform students about the quality of their work and the steps they should take to improve it. However, this excellent practice is not consistently employed across the school. Students are well aware of their targets and they pursue them enthusiastically. During lessons, they enjoy high-quality oral feedback and questioning from teachers and this further supports their outstanding progress.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and flexible so that the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are met exceptionally well. At Key Stage 3, three modern foreign languages are offered and great emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and ICT skills. At the end of Year 8, students are offered a very wide range of academic and applied learning qualifications from which to select. Almost all students take at least one GCSE in a modern foreign language and attainment is significantly above the national average. The introduction of applied learning courses since the last inspection, with outstanding facilities for courses in

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construction and hair and beauty, is engaging students as well as raising self-esteem. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those speaking English as an additional language make outstanding progress because of the highly appropriate curriculum and the excellent care and support they receive. A wide range of trips, activity days and after-school activities enriches the curriculum further. These, together with the very well received and planned 'life course', impact well on students' personal, social and cultural development.

Strong pastoral teams have very effective systems to monitor the well-being of students, including those most in need of additional support, and identify concerns early. As a result, students receive outstanding care and support from both within school and from outside agencies. Students say they feel able to approach staff with any problems or issues they may have and feel confident that the school will deal with them effectively. Students have a good understanding of risks, including those relating to the use of new technologies. Transition arrangements for the new Year 7 are highly regarded and students say they are extremely well supported in making their choices as they move through the school and beyond. As a result, almost all move into the school's sixth form or other post-16 education, work or training.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: 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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

A climate of improvement pervades the school because of the exceptional drive and ambition to maximise both the academic and personal outcomes for all students. Morale is high and this is reflected in responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaires where all agreed, or strongly agreed, with the statement, 'I am proud to be a member of this school.'

The leadership of teaching and learning is outstanding and firmly linked to the school's status as a Training School. This can be seen clearly in the career pathways developed for all staff in the school at all levels and in the excellent support given to teachers new to the profession. Challenging targets are set for each student and their progress is tracked rigorously with well-planned and supported interventions, if needed.

The school has robust systems to ensure the safety of the students. Policies are clear, well structured and understood by all. Systems are regularly monitored and evaluated and updated when necessary. Records are well maintained. The equality of opportunity offered students, regardless of their background, ability or educational need, in all

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aspects of school life, is outstanding; any discrimination is tackled rigorously. Outstanding partnerships enhance almost all aspects of school life, including curriculum provision, links with external agencies to support students' well-being and the professional development of staff. Engagement with parents and carers is good because the school uses a wide range of approaches, including electronic communication. Governors are well organised and have a full programme of work to keep themselves informed and to support the school. They, effectively, hold the school to account on almost all issues. However, they rely too heavily on the school for gathering the views of parents and carers. A well-formed plan supports the school's active development of a highly cohesive community both in school and the local area. However, the school does not always fully evaluate the impact of its actions, and as a result students' cultural awareness is less well-developed at national level.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

**Sixth form**

The majority of students choose to remain in the school at the end of Year 11, reflecting the high regard in which the sixth form is held. However, a significant minority enrol from other schools, including those who join the PEP unit. Students make good progress from their varied starting points and almost all remain until the end of their courses. The achievement of PEP students and of those studying level 2 applied learning courses is outstanding. However, A-level attainment, while good overall, varies significantly both between and within subjects.

Students enjoy sixth-form life and benefit from good facilities and teaching. Teachers



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have good subject knowledge, but, as in the main school, independent learning is not always sufficiently promoted in lessons. The curriculum is well matched to the very wide range of students' abilities and interests with clear progression routes in both academic and applied learning courses. Students are very mature and take responsibility for their own learning, particularly in their approach to private study. All students, including those in the PEP unit, make particularly strong contributions to the school and wider community, for example as part of the school council. Almost all students participate in at least one of the range of enrichment opportunities

Students' progress is carefully tracked and students appreciate the helpful feedback they receive about their work and the additional help given by both subject staff and the pastoral team, often in their own time. Students receive excellent care, guidance and support, including the PEP students and those speaking English as an additional language. Progression to university, employment and training is exceptionally high and well supported by the school's guidance systems. Sixth-form leadership is good, and focused on evaluating and addressing any variations in performance.

*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**

A small minority of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. They were overwhelmingly positive about the school and many added very positive comments about their children's experiences. However, a few raised concerns over a wide spread of issues, including perceived inconsistency in the way the school manages poor behaviour and the care given to students. The inspection team raised these concerns with the school and found that the school regularly reviewed and revised its systems and procedures and that it had already addressed these concerns.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cheam 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 300 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1909 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	125	42	156	52	13	4	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	145	48	147	49	6	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	162	54	128	43	10	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	145	48	137	46	16	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	426	42	159	53	14	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	109	36	162	59	26	9	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	26	176	59	37	12	4	1
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)	117	39	146	49	15	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	119	40	161	54	16	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	112	37	159	53	21	7	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	89	30	174	58	20	7	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	154	48	147	49	6	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	160	53	130	43	7	2	1	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

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](http://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"><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.**



14 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Cheam High School, Sutton, SM3 8PW

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to let you know that we enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. Here is a summary of our main inspection findings, although I hope that you will take the time to read the full report.

- You receive an outstanding quality of education at Cheam High School.
- You enjoy all aspects of school life and you are enthusiastic learners; as a result, your attendance is high.
- You make outstanding progress by the end of Year 11 and your attainment is significantly above national averages.
- In the sixth form, those of you on A-level courses make good progress overall and progress is outstanding for those of you on level 2 vocational courses or in the PEP group.
- The quality of teaching is good, although in some lessons you do not always receive sufficient opportunities for independent learning.
- Your curriculum is outstanding because it meets your varied needs and interests exceptionally well and it is enhanced by a range of different activities.
- You behave well, and show considerable respect for each other.
- You feel very safe because you are all exceptionally well cared for and supported. You receive excellent guidance as you move through the school and prepare yourselves for life beyond it.

Your outstanding headteacher and senior leaders have worked hard to improve the school and, together with all the other staff in the school, are keen to improve it further. To help them with this, I have said that senior leaders should:

- increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by building on the excellent classroom practice which has already been developed.

You can help by maintaining your high levels of attendance, continuing to make the most of opportunities offered to you and in becoming more independent learners.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett - Her Majesty's Inspector

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