

Hendon School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137635
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	387164
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2011
Reporting inspector	David Radomsky

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
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	1,269
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Macalpine
Headteacher	Kevin Mckellar
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 May 2007
School address	Golders Rise Hendon London NW4 2HP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 50 lessons taught by 49 teachers, and meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised policies, exercise books, monitoring information, safeguarding procedures, data about past and recent performance, and the school's improvement plans. The team analysed 264 parental questionnaires, 43 completed by staff and 163 by students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment, learning and progress of all students and their performance in different subjects.
- How effectively leaders at all levels are addressing school variation, particularly through tackling any inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment.
- The leadership, provision and the outcomes attained by students in the sixth form.

Information about the school

Hendon School is a larger-than-average-sized school, with languages specialist status. A well-above-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is well above average, as is the proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average overall, with a well-above-average proportion having statements of special educational needs, mostly for hearing impairment. The school has a range of accreditations, including International School Status and Artsmark Gold award. The school has recently been selected as one of a small number of Arts Award Good Practice Centres across the country. The school has a hearing impaired unit with space for 20 students and in September 2008 opened the local authority's first resourced provision to support students with Autism Spectrum Conditions in a mainstream secondary school. A new sixth-form centre opened in September 2011 and the school recently converted to academy status.

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

Since the previous inspection, this school has made rapid improvements in all aspects of its work and now provides an outstanding education for its students. The inspirational headteacher and his leadership team have excellent complementary leadership skills which they use to great effect in driving improvements rapidly and keeping all stakeholders motivated to always strive to do better. As one parent, representing the view of many, said, 'The staff are approachable, knowledgeable, open to suggestions and willing to listen to both myself and my child. The teaching is very sound and the pastoral care outstanding.' The school knows itself very well through rigorous self-evaluation. Clear priority setting has meant that there has been a sustained upward trajectory in students' attainment. Since the previous inspection, this has risen to high attainment and the rates of progress are now outstanding overall. Differences in performance across subjects are narrowing and more students gain higher grades. Excellent systems are in place for tracking students' achievements and well-being and for supporting those who are not meeting expectations. Senior and middle leaders support the teaching skills of staff very well. An excellent track record of rapid and continuous improvement in all aspects of students' learning and well-being, combined with the strong challenge and support offered by the governing body, demonstrates an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Students receive outstanding care and support. Consequently, they enjoy school and attendance is high. Key factors in this are an outstanding and innovative curriculum which meets the needs and aspirations of all students, the positive impact the areas of specialism have on provision and the wide-ranging enrichment programme. Excellent links with outside agencies and strong engagement with parents and carers contribute significantly to the strengths in students' personal development, well-being and academic achievement. Those students with hearing impairments, those on the autistic spectrum and those facing other challenging circumstances are fully included in school life and make similar outstanding progress to their peers. Students value the way they are supported and say they feel very safe at all times and that they are enabled to make well-informed choices about their futures and pursue healthy lifestyles. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community and have well-developed personal attitudes and engage positively with people of different faiths and cultures.

The quality of teaching is outstanding overall as teachers prepare a range of engaging activities that both challenge and support the full range of students' needs. Most teachers ensure that their students receive good guidance on how to improve

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their work, but in a small minority of cases, guidance lacks adequate detail and insufficient opportunities are given to students to respond and follow up on teachers' comments and learn from their mistakes.

Since the previous inspection, the popularity of the sixth form has increased, as has the number of students opting to stay at the school for their post-16 education. Attendance has risen significantly, and leaders have introduced a broader curriculum offer to better meet the needs and interests of students. Owing to improved teaching, rates of progress have accelerated, especially during Year 13, but there remains a sizeable, if narrowing, gap between the performances of different subjects.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that marking of work at all key stages consistently gives students precise guidance about how to improve their work, and ensure that such guidance is regularly followed up.
- Raise attainment and narrow the performance gaps across the subjects in the sixth form by:
 - drawing on best practice in teaching to ensure that across all subjects activities are planned to challenge all students and that they are given plenty of opportunities for independent work
 - ensuring that leaders' monitoring and evaluation focuses sharply on improving further the learning and progress of all.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students are proud of their school and enjoy their lessons a great deal. The level of commitment to their work is very high and they collaborate extremely well when working in groups or in pairs. For example, in a Year 9 religious studies lesson, students sensitively discussed and debated the question of whether there is a moral equivalence between racism and homophobia. In a Year 12 sociology lesson, pairs researched information on either the functionalist or the Marxist view of education and then shared their findings and taught each other.

Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly average. They make outstanding progress during their time at the school so that attainment at the end of Year 11 is high. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities or facing other challenging circumstance, and those for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their peers.

Students make an excellent contribution to the school and wider communities by, for example, training to be peer mentors, subject leaders or year leaders. They readily

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contribute to and participate in the school’s annual summer fair in the local area and they raise considerable sums of money for charity including, for instance, in response to the Japanese earthquake earlier this year.

Students have a strong set of personal values combined with empathy, awareness and an understanding of others. They respect and value cultural diversity and gain an excellent insight into the lives, experiences and beliefs of others through first-hand experiences and their openness to new ideas. As one student told the inspectors, ‘With the experience of mixing with students of a range of cultures in the school and through learning different languages, we are given skills for life.’

With their excellent grasp of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, combined with their aspirations and determination to succeed, students are very well prepared for future studies, work and their 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	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?

Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and enthusiasm, which motivates and inspires students. Through well-established relationships with their students, teachers ensure that all students engage well in lessons. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the best lessons, which account for the large majority seen, teachers set a good pace

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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and encourage students actively to lead their own learning and work collaboratively with their peers. For instance, in a Year 10 lesson on using spreadsheets accurately, instruction was given by a student, and the teacher allowed mistakes to happen so that students could learn by trial and error and then explain to each other how to formulate cells accurately. Inspectors observed some good use of self assessment and peer assessment, supported by effective feedback from teachers, though in a few cases this is not replicated in marking.

The curriculum is very well organised and offers excellent opportunities for learning and experiences that contribute considerably to students’ personal development and well-being. Students benefit from being able to make choices from a wide range of options so that learning programmes are well tailored to meet their needs and interests. Enrichment activities, such as students’ dramatic and operatic productions, which have been enthusiastically received by the local community, have widened their experiences. The broad extent of arts-related activities available is reflected in the Artsmark Gold award and the school is sharing its expertise through its work as an Arts Good Practice Centre. The specialist language status, plus a range of regular opportunities for sport, visitors to the school and educational visits in this country and abroad, helps students to put their learning into context and make an excellent contribution to their outstanding learning, progress and personal development. Many opportunities across subjects and during tutor time to debate issues such as ‘Should Britain ban the burka’ and ‘Capital punishment’ ensure that students’ thinking skills and moral awareness are developed in an exemplary fashion.

The school provides an excellent learning environment. A strong sense of ambition is underpinned by a very caring ethos. Staff work collaboratively in providing the very best academic and pastoral support to students whose families may be facing challenging circumstances. That support, combined with well-established partnerships with agencies, ensures that students are known to all as individuals and appropriate support is forthcoming in a timely fashion, leading to outstanding outcomes for all. There are strong links with primary schools and the arrangements for transfer from Year 6 to Year 7 are very well developed. Sound advice is offered to students when choosing their Key Stage 4 and sixth-form options.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
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?

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The school benefits from the dynamic and motivational leadership provided by the headteacher, who joined the school just before the previous inspection. Since then, the school has improved rapidly in all aspects of its work. Along with the governing body, all leaders communicate a shared vision that is ambitiously focused on raising attainment and opportunities for all. Staff feel valued and morale is high. As one teacher said, 'Staff and students' well-being is a priority alongside progress and achievement.'

A key driver in raising attainment has been the regular evaluation and development planning, which is driven by well-focused priorities and ambitious quantified targets for improvement. Additionally, leaders support the professional development of teachers well. For example, teachers welcome and benefit from the regular coaching that they receive from the school's behaviour and inclusion team and many are currently enrolled on either a Masters or Doctorate course through a partnership with Middlesex University. The regular student-progress meetings held with senior leaders, subject and pastoral leaders, and the resulting plans to remedy identified weaknesses, ensure that underachieving students are spotted quickly and that teachers are accountable for the outstanding progress of all. Leaders are very effective at monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, but there is still more to do in the sixth form to reduce the residual pockets of less effective teaching to bring about a greater consistency across the subjects.

Equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is at the heart of the school's work and hence all achieve outstanding outcomes. This school is a harmonious community and discrimination is not tolerated. Recently, the school held its first of a series of planned conferences on diversity looking at issues of how to tackle all forms of discrimination and prejudice. Every effort is made to fully include all students in all aspects of school life and all students have equal opportunities to participate in activities. For example, vulnerable students are targeted, supported and encouraged to participate in activities that will improve their personal development and progress.

The school's commitment to community cohesion is exemplary. Students benefit enormously from the annual student exchange scheme with a school in Japan and current Year 10 students are raising funds to visit and support a school in an informal settlement in South Africa during a planned visit next year. The school runs an extremely well-attended Saturday School teaching a range of languages, some of which are accredited courses, for members of the school and local community. As a result of these and many other opportunities, students have a strong understanding of the diversity of religious, ethnic and cultural groups locally, nationally and internationally, as reflected in the school's International School Status Award.

The governing body brings a wide range of expertise, are highly supportive and effectively call leaders to account for the quality of all aspects of the school's performance. Members of the governing body regularly attend school events and are at an early stage of extending their monitoring activities through direct observation of the school's work via link governorship. There are effective measures in place to

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check and vet staff before they are appointed, and policies and procedures for safeguarding are enacted and monitored so that young people are kept safe at all times.

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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 in the sixth form succeed well in their studies and personal development. Attainment is average and students’ progress is good overall, though it is uneven across the subjects. Attendance is high and students make a very strong contribution to the life of the school. They are highly motivated to support younger students in their learning and progress, such as through the ‘reading partners’ scheme. They lead extra-curricular activities, such as organising sporting and fund-raising activities, and running citizenship-related campaigns with Year 10 students, for instance, for local road safety.

Teaching is effective in enabling students to learn well. In most lessons seen in the sixth form, teachers challenge students effectively and help them develop excellent analytical and evaluation skills. Progress slows when students are not given sufficient opportunities to develop independent learning and research skills. The school has continued to develop the curriculum since the last inspection by introducing more vocational options and responding to students’ changing needs. The good match that the curriculum provides to students’ interests, abilities and aspirations is confirmed by the high retention rates both into and within the sixth form. Enrichment and extra-curricular activities, many of which students organise themselves, enhance their learning and development. Students are highly appreciative of the personal support and guidance that they receive from their

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teachers and tutors.

Sixth-form leaders use information effectively to plan for improvements, although their monitoring and evaluation does not focus sufficiently on the progress of all students. They are highly ambitious for and supportive of their students and are committed to improving the consistency of high quality teaching and learning. As a result, the school is attracting the full ability range into the sixth form as students have confidence that they will be effectively supported to develop the necessary skills for their future learning and employment. As a result, the proportion of students who leave the sixth form not in education, employment or training is well below the national average.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
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 return rate of the Ofsted questionnaire was above average. Almost all of the parents and carers who responded were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They were particularly positive about how their children enjoyed school, the school's due regard for their children's safety and how teaching is good at the school. Inspection evidence confirmed this. A few parents and carers raised concerns about how effectively the school helps them to support their children's learning, and a few about how the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found that much information is available to parents and carers through a range of media and that adult education classes run by the school help parents and carers support their children's learning well. Health is well promoted, particularly through a range of sporting opportunities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hendon 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 264 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1269 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	126	48	129	49	5	2	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	96	36	160	61	6	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	107	41	137	52	14	5	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	91	34	150	57	20	8	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	77	29	172	65	6	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	80	30	148	56	29	11	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	28	158	60	26	10	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)	85	32	143	54	12	5	1	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	73	28	157	59	16	6	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	102	39	139	53	13	5	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	78	30	144	55	21	8	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	108	41	135	51	11	4	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	123	47	126	48	12	5	2	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



24 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Hendon School, Hendon, NW4 2HP

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. We greatly enjoyed talking to many of you. Yours is an outstanding school and these are some of the reasons why.

Your headteacher, staff and governing body are passionate in wanting to help you achieve excellence in all that you do. The curriculum and extended opportunities which the school provides for you ensure that you have the widest possible choices that give you exceptionally good and enjoyable learning opportunities and prepare you well for the future. You willingly take on a broad range of responsibilities in the school and in the community. Your charitable work is extensive and you have a real sense of what it means to be responsible citizens. Almost all teachers prepare high quality lessons and work with you to make your learning exciting. You agreed that you feel very safe and very well cared for and supported. You are confident, and you appreciate and celebrate difference so that everyone feels part of the school community.

Even outstanding schools have things that could be better.

We have asked the school to ensure that you always have an opportunity to follow up on your teachers' comments for improvement. Your school leaders are also going to work more with the teachers of sixth-form classes to make sure that you can make even better progress across the subjects by giving you more opportunities to research and work independently.

You can contribute to these improvements by working hard and responding well to all that the teachers ask you to do.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Radomsky
Lead inspector

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