

Greenford High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101940
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	376647
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,828
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	604
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Scott Packman
Headteacher	Mathew Cramer
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2009
School address	Lady Margaret Road Southall Middlesex UB1 2GU
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 55 lessons involving 55 teachers, observed tutorial sessions and attended an assembly and after-school provision. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, assessment information and students' work. In addition, inspectors analysed questionnaires from 245 parents and carers, and looked at others from staff and students.

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

- How well teachers use assessment information to plan work to accelerate students' performance and the extent to which teaching challenges girls and the most-able students in particular.
- How sustainable are the improvements in students' attendance.
- How well students from different backgrounds get on together, behave and contribute to the community.
- The effectiveness of provision in the sixth form in securing good outcomes for students.

Information about the school

This large secondary school serves students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The school roll has increased since the last inspection. The vast majority of students are from minority ethnic heritages, mainly Asian backgrounds, and the proportion speaking English as an additional language is well above average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The school holds Language and Business and Enterprise specialist status and is a Training School. It recently received recognition as an improved school by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

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

Greenford High School is an outstanding school which has improved most aspects of its work since the last inspection, and this is reflected in its designation as an 'improved school' by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Students make outstanding progress from their starting points when they join the school. Attainment in external examinations is high, most notably in the proportion of students gaining at least five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics. Performance in these subjects has been strong for a number of years. Attainment in science has improved well over the last two years, although it does not yet match that of English and mathematics. Attainment in the school's specialist subjects, foreign languages and business, is significantly above the national averages. The variation between subjects, evident in the last inspection, has been largely ironed out.

The school lives its motto, 'Learning to Succeed'. It has established a powerful learning ethos and high expectations for students' achievement, shared by adults and students alike. This promotes students' enjoyment of learning and their regular attendance. Students reflect maturely about how effectively the school fosters ambition and a thirst for achievement, and how it enables them to develop as individuals. They speak enthusiastically about how staff help and support them, saying that adults know them well and 'really let us know that they are there for us'. A key strength lies in the positive relationships between students from a diverse range of backgrounds and between students and staff. The promotion of equality of opportunity lies at the heart of the school's work, actively encouraging respect for human rights and value for different cultures. The success of this approach is seen in students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, students behave exceptionally well around the school. Politeness and consideration for others are the norm.

The curriculum is innovatively planned to make learning memorable. It caters for individual needs and abilities by enabling students to study and gain GCSE accreditation as early as Year 9. Much good and some outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. The school has taken a systematic approach to researching and developing the quality of its practice. Best practice is identified and shared so that it spreads through the school. A number of staff are relatively inexperienced and are still developing their teaching skills. The inconsistencies seen during the inspection are already being tackled by the school through a well-planned training and coaching programme. For example, the outcomes set for learning are occasionally insufficiently clear for students to monitor their own progress through

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the lesson. While much marking follows the school's new guidance and gives students feedback about how work could be improved, the policy is not yet consistently applied by all teachers. Teachers have a good awareness of the differing needs and abilities of the students, but in a few lessons this information is not used well enough to plan different tasks that would enable students to make even faster progress. Improved tracking of students' performance is used very well to pick up any students falling behind and immediate action is taken to boost progress. Consequently, all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and those from different ethnic groups make similar rates of progress.

The rapid improvements brought about since the last inspection, most notably in students' attainment, progress and attendance, are a result of outstanding leadership and management. Staff and the governing body share a very clear vision for improvement and set themselves extremely challenging targets for performance, which they regularly exceed. Systems are highly effective in ensuring that the school's work is held under constant review. The school's self-evaluation is extremely accurate, enabling staff and the governing body to tackle priorities systematically and with precision. Priorities for development are widely understood and shared. The school's track record of improvement shows its outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed the approaches to teaching being promoted within the school so that all teaching is consistently good or outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - the outcomes set for learning are sufficiently clear for students to monitor their progress through the lesson
 - marking is regular and in line with the school's policy to give students clear guidance about the quality of their work and how it can be improved
 - the tasks set for students always take account of the differing needs and abilities within the class.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students enjoy school, are keen to do well and are motivated by the excellent school facilities. Their positive attitudes make a strong contribution to very effective learning in lessons because no time is lost in managing behaviour. Students collaborate very well, discussing their learning and helping one another, which effectively deepens their understanding. They show high levels of concentration in lessons because they find their work interesting. For example, in a science lesson, students showed great delight as they discovered a beam of white light being split into the colours of the rainbow. Because students have regular opportunities for self- and peer-evaluation in lessons, they have a good understanding of how well they are progressing and the next steps they need to take to improve. Students gain a momentum in their learning as they move through the school and their progress speeds up. This is boosted very

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effectively through a range of additional lessons and help beyond the school day and during holidays. As a result, students’ attainment in examination results at the end of Key Stage 4 is much higher than might be expected, given their lower than average starting points at the beginning of Year 7. Students’ achievement is outstanding. The school’s current data show that over the last year, there are only minor variations in the performance of different groups. All groups, including students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn very well. This shows the effectiveness of the school’s response to earlier national data, which showed that, although their attainment was higher, girls and higher-attaining students did not make as much progress as other groups. The proportion of students attaining the higher A*/A grades at GCSE increased significantly this year and the indications are that this will improve further next year.

The school’s positive and cohesive ethos is a major factor in ensuring that students feel exceptionally safe, knowing that bullying and other inappropriate behaviour is minimal. A major improvement since the last inspection is the sharp reduction in absence. Attendance has improved from average to high within two years. Students are well aware of how to lead healthy lifestyles, and know exactly where to go for advice and support should they need it. They make a good contribution to the school community, for example through the junior leadership team’s advice on the most effective approaches to learning. Many students take part in activities such as helping in primary schools or in local care homes, and the school is constantly seeking additional ways for students to develop their leadership skills beyond the school. Students’ strong work ethic and high levels of literacy, numeracy and computing ensure that they are very well equipped for higher education and the world of work.

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	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1

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 extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers create a positive atmosphere in lessons so that students are able to test out their thinking, for example through debate, knowing that their ideas will be listened to and respected by others. Students see themselves as partners in learning, prompted by the way teachers help them to develop independent learning skills. Communication with students and their parents or carers through the diary helps this dialogue and gives students opportunities to understand how to plan their own study. The strengths of teaching are seen in the way teachers use their good subject knowledge creatively to set up lessons that are interesting and require students to think things through for themselves in a practical way. Teachers use questioning well, particularly to check students' prior understanding, so that learning is taken forward quickly from their starting points. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of those students they are supporting, by probing understanding and clarifying learning. Instances of the effective use of the interactive whiteboards were observed during the inspection, although in some lessons these were underused as a resource to illustrate and bring learning to life. By contrast, the school's 'virtual learning environment' provides a wide range of resources and is well used by students.

The curriculum has been reviewed and developed to provide a model which ensures high-quality learning experiences. There are many aspects which make learning memorable. The structure is personalised so that students study and gain accreditation at times appropriate to individuals. Students develop thinking skills discretely and across the curriculum, which very effectively encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning and achievement. Beyond the school day, enrichment opportunities provide for the full range of abilities and interests, and participation rates are high. A very wide range of school visits and special events make learning relevant to students' experiences, seen during the inspection when a group returned after a successful geography field trip. The school effectively dovetails opportunities provided through its two specialisms, for example through work experience with multinational businesses where students gain experience of using foreign languages within a business environment.

Care, guidance and support are characterised by outstanding inclusive practice. All students are inspired to set and achieve high goals for themselves. Highly effective staff teams and partnerships lead to positive academic and personal well-being for all, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who have had earlier unsuccessful school experiences. The school proactively plans personalised interventions, such as the 'Early Birds' project to improve attendance and the smooth induction of students new to Year 7 or who join mid-term. Exemplary practice, such as the clear guidance materials for teachers on teaching approaches to meet the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensure that students' needs are identified and supported so that they make outstanding

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progress, both academically and socially.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has developed very effectively under the quiet, but passionate, and inspirational leadership of the headteacher, and is valued by staff and students. Across the school, leadership skills are strong and there is a common sense of purpose and drive to raise further the quality of teaching and learning. The programme to support this development is outstanding, with priority and time given to professional development which is highly individualised, meeting whole-school and personal priorities. Guidance focuses on practical ideas that can be implemented immediately. Morale is very high and staff know how they will achieve further improvements. Rigorous monitoring and intervention, combined with open and honest support for those who need further help, are the key to this success and help to ensure equal opportunities and achievement for all groups of students.

The governing body is very well led and governance makes a significant contribution to the school's success by its involvement in monitoring progress and holding staff to account. The school's systems to safeguard students are excellent, and recognised by the Child Exploitation for Online Protection centre. They are designed to promote students' understanding of how to protect themselves. For example, water safety is encouraged and students undertake a study of cyber bullying before being allowed to 'log in' to the school's systems. Partnerships are extremely strong, benefiting students in a variety of ways, including accreditation as sports coaches which they use to run sports events in primary schools. Highly effective pastoral partnerships, such as crisis counselling and links with police and social services, ensure that individual students have the support they need to overcome their difficulties. Promoting equality of opportunity and community cohesion are at the heart of the school's work. The emphasis on monitoring progress and helping students to check their own progress ensures that any underachievement is picked up at an individual level quickly and support put in place to bring about improvement. The school knows its community very well. The action it takes ensures that the school is a cohesive community where students are able to thrive and take their understanding and values successfully into the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	1
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	1
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

The sixth form is popular and outstandingly successful, mirroring the improvements secured elsewhere in the school since the last inspection. Students are proud of their school and the contribution they make to it. They are mature and have good regard for their own safety and well-being and that of others. The school's commitment to inclusion is seen in the wide range of courses on offer to meet the needs of the full ability range. This personalised approach enables students to 'mix and match' courses to their needs. While most students gained university places in 2011, others developed their confidence from their below average GCSE attainment and gained accreditation in vocational courses which enabled them to gain access to further education or employment. Consistently good or better quality teaching enables students to do very well. National comparative data show that students make outstanding progress from their starting points, and this is reflected in an increase in the proportion of students achieving the higher grades, particularly at AS level, which prepares them well for further A-level study. The value that is added is relatively even across subjects, although students do particularly well in economics, geography, information technology, media studies and psychology. A particular strength of teaching is how it enables students to have a thorough understanding of how to assess their work.

Students' personal development is also outstanding. Students are excellent ambassadors for the school and role models for younger students. They appreciate the opportunities they have to develop personally through activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and post-16 committee or mentoring schemes. Students are inducted well into the sixth form, and are very appreciative of the care, guidance and support on offer. Leaders and managers have high expectations of sixth-form students. Students respond well and set high targets for their own achievement, and develop excellent independent learning skills. As in the main

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school, rigorous systems for monitoring progress mean that any underachievement is picked up and addressed quickly.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

The return rate of the inspection questionnaire was lower than for most secondary schools. All but a very few of the responses indicate that parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of school life. In particular, they indicate that teaching is good and that the school is led and managed effectively. The inspection evidence confirms these views. A few parents and carers did not agree that the school helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle and that behaviour is not dealt with effectively. Inspectors judge from this inspection that the school supports students' understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles well, including through the curriculum, personal advice on health issues, and opportunities for involvement in additional sporting activities. Adults manage students well so that their behaviour is outstanding and a key strength of the school. A few questionnaires raised reservations about a small number of individual issues and these views were taken into consideration during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greenford 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 245 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1828 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	115	47	121	49	8	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	129	53	105	43	4	2	3	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	124	51	105	43	7	3	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	96	39	131	53	8	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	104	42	133	54	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	90	37	134	55	14	6	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	28	146	60	25	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)	95	39	127	52	10	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	78	32	143	58	15	6	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	112	46	112	46	11	4	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	22	160	65	23	9	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	115	47	119	49	6	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	141	58	96	39	4	2	3	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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.

9 November 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Greenford High School, Southall, UB1 2GU

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team, and particularly to those who gave up part of your lunchtime to share your views about the school. I am writing to let you know the outcomes of the recent inspection.

Greenford High School is outstanding. Since the last inspection in 2009, results have improved each year. The best GCSE results were achieved in 2011 and current performance levels show that students in Year 11 are on course to improve further on these results. You do particularly well in English and mathematics, which prepares you well for study or employment after school. Well done! You told us how much you appreciate that the headteacher is around during lunch and that he often listens to your views. He is supported very well by the governing body and other leaders in planning how the school will develop further.

The school gives you excellent opportunities to develop your interests and talents. You make outstanding progress because you choose from courses which interest and motivate you. Outstanding behaviour means that you feel exceptionally safe and are able to concentrate in lessons. Teaching is good and we saw how you appreciate the support of adults who are always on hand to offer help when it is needed, whether to explain work further or to help you when you may have particular personal difficulties. It is good to see that politeness and consideration for others is the norm around school.

Although the school provides outstandingly well for you already, there are always things that can be refined and developed. Staff are clear about how this should be undertaken to ensure that your achievement remains outstanding. We have asked your teachers to make sure that the outcomes set in each lesson are sufficiently clear for you to monitor your progress throughout the lesson, and that the tasks set for you are always at the right level for you to make progress and learn quickly. Teachers are adjusting to the new marking policy but, at present, sometimes you are not given enough guidance on how to improve your work. The school has demonstrated that it will continue to improve and we wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings
Lead inspector

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