

Cambridge School

61 Bryony Road, White City, London, W12 0SP

Inspection dates 13-14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Teaching is almost always good and occasionally outstanding. The quality of teaching has improved rapidly over the previous year.
- Teachers and other adults know the students very well. On almost all occasions, they provide students with activities which challenge them and which are well suited to their abilities.
- Students have made above expected, and sometimes even rapid, progress over the last year. The most-able are on target to attain GCSE qualifications.
- The subjects students study are well planned to interest them and to promote their progress. Students enjoy their learning.
- The students feel safe and secure. Their attendance is above average compared to that of other special schools.
- The students' behaviour is well managed. There are clear procedures and rules for acceptable conduct that students understand and follow willingly. The school provides a high level of additional support for students experiencing emotional or behavioural problems.
- The interim headteacher has made significant improvements to the school, supported extremely well by local authority officers. The headteacher has successfully led his team of senior staff. Together they have rigorously checked and improved on the quality of teaching.
- Governors have played a prominent part in ensuring that teaching and the rate of students' progress has significantly improved. Governors have an exceptionally clear understanding of the school's strengths and remaining areas for development. They challenge and support the school's leadership well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not plan an individual student's activities in sufficient detail to ensure that the student makes the progress of which he or she is capable.
- There are sometimes inconsistencies in the quality of marking and feedback to students about their work. This means that sometimes students repeat the same mistakes and do not understand fully how to make their work better.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students learning in nine lessons and parts of lessons, all of which were joint observations with a senior staff member.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle managers, governors and a representative of the local authority. Frequent informal discussions were held with students to establish their attitudes towards the school and enjoyment in their learning.
- Inspectors took into account the school's surveys of parents' opinions, gained since September 2014. There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to be included.
- The completed 16 staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's review of its own progress and forward planning. Records of students' progress and achievement in academic and personal development were analysed, together with monitoring reports on the quality of teaching, the performance management of staff and curriculum documents. Attendance figures and all procedures for the safeguarding of students were looked at.

Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband	Additional inspector
Sue Cox	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for students with moderate learning difficulties and for a rapidly rising proportion of students with complex learning needs, such as speech and language difficulties or a diagnosis of autism. All the students have a statement of special educational needs.
- There are more boys than girls.
- The majority of students are from minority ethnic groups, particularly Black Caribbean and Black African.
- About 40% of students are eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra government funding for disadvantaged students and includes those entitled to free school meals or who are looked after. This is significantly above average.
- After a turbulent period in the school's history, an interim headteacher was appointed in September 2014. A permanent headteacher took up duty in April 2015. The deputy headteacher has been in post for about one year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its students.
- The school operates a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that all teachers' planning is focused specifically on the learning needs of each student
 - making sure in the marking and feedback to students about their work that they always understand how to make their work better.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management is good

- The interim headteacher, ably supported by a team of senior staff, has made very significant improvements in one year to the quality of teaching and the rates of students' progress. When he took over, many teachers were temporary or supply staff. Over the year, he has made successful permanent appointments and there is now a strong and effective teaching force. Teachers and adults are enthusiastic about the school's progress. Several teachers commented that they felt confident the school was moving forward again.
- School leaders systematically check the progress of each student. There were few records before September 2014. Since then, teachers have very regularly recorded students' progress and provided well-directed interventions should students start to fall behind. Over the year, the rate of students' progress has accelerated due to continued improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The careful checks on students' progress ensure that every student is encouraged to do his or her best. There are equal opportunities for all and no discrimination of any kind.
- The majority of students are from minority ethnic groups. These students achieve equally well, as do the small proportion who speak English as an additional language. This is because of the attention paid to their academic and personal skills and the well-structured support they are given.
- Additional government funding for disadvantaged students is used well to provide extra small group and individual tuition in English and mathematics, as well as funding a breakfast club. The latter has had a significant impact on the students' well-being and readiness to learn. As a result, the students who are eligible have made good progress.
- Leaders rigorously and regularly check on the work of teachers. Strong subject leaders in mathematics and, more recently, English have a significant impact on the quality of teaching in their areas and on the rate of students' progress. Performance by teachers that does not meet the school's increasingly high standards is quickly tackled. Many teachers are relatively new to the school. They welcome the supportive monitoring of their performance. They accept that pay awards are linked to their accountability for students' achievements. Morale is good.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, evaluate the school's work realistically and effectively. This has led to detailed plans for further improvement. There is a good capacity to maintain and build on the improvements already made. For instance, through their careful checks leaders are aware that there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- The local authority has supported the school very effectively through its recent difficult times. Officers have worked successfully with governors and the interim headteacher to promote checks on teachers' performance and to raise standards overall.
- Students enjoy school. Their attendance is good. They are interested in the subjects they study, which in Years 7 to 9 are based closely on National Curriculum programmes, but which are well adapted for their learning needs and abilities. Students make good progress in English and mathematics because of good teaching. Literacy and numeracy skills are built into every subject so that the students have many opportunities to practise skills and so enhance their performance.
- Older students in Years 10 and 11 have many more recent opportunities to study GCSE subjects, including English and mathematics, as well as a good range of work-related courses leading to vocational qualifications. Every student in Year 11 will go on to further education courses at local colleges.
- All students take part in extensive personal, social and health-related courses. They effectively learn about common dangers and relationships. They learn about cultural, religious and social diversity in their local area and nationally. They also learn about what being British means through specific courses on democracy and justice, on rights and responsibilities and in challenging stereotypes. As a result, they are well prepared to take their place in modern Britain.
- There are good facilities and resources for physical activities that students enjoy and can lead to a GCSE qualification in sport. Older students take part in work experience and go on a residential trip each year. The school council was influential in proposing new and improved sports facilities. The curriculum contributes well to students' academic progress, their physical and emotional well-being, and behaviour. It makes a successful contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Parents report that they are satisfied with the school's work. They feel confident that their children are well cared for and making good progress. A small proportion of parents had remaining concerns over behaviour, but these concerns were not borne out by inspection findings.
- The school's organisation of safeguarding arrangements is secure and fulfils statutory requirements.

The governance of the school:

- Governors have made a significant contribution to the school's recent improvements. Many governors are relatively new, led by a very energetic Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. Governors have improved their own performance considerably since the previous inspection after an external review of their effectiveness. They are very well informed about the school's work and members have a very clear understanding of the students' achievement and well-being. They effectively scrutinise data about the students' performance in a range of areas, such as their academic progress, personal skills and attendance.
- Members of the governing body are extremely well informed about the quality of teaching and how good performance is rewarded and any underperformance tackled. They rigorously check the use of additional funding and how effectively it has raised the achievement of disadvantaged students. Governors have taken part in regular training, for instance in child protection and the interpretation of data. They ensure that current statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students mostly have positive attitudes to their learning. They establish good relations with each other and with adults, and there is very little disruption to learning. This has a good impact on their learning and progress. Their attendance is above average for the type of school.
- Behaviour around the school, for instance in the dining room and playground, is good. The school is characterised by the cooperation and support given to each other by students and staff.
- The students' behaviour is managed well. There are clear procedures that students understand and subscribe to willingly. Teachers carefully record any incidents of unacceptable conduct and focus extra support, whether by speech or occupational therapy. A trained psychotherapist co-ordinates appropriate support of health, social and psychological services and involves parents fully.
- The school's records demonstrate how successful this approach has been. Incidents of poor conduct have declined rapidly since last September, as have temporary exclusions. The school is aware that it can still improve on these figures.
- Parents, staff and students have confidence in the school's procedures. A small proportion of parents reported that they still had concerns over behaviour, but these concerns were not borne out by the inspection findings.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures are subject to audit and scrutiny by governors and the local authority.
- The students are well supervised. All staff are appropriately trained in calming challenging behaviour.
- Students develop a good understanding of how to keep safe through regular lessons in combating danger, in the misuse of drugs and how to travel independently safely. They take part in regular trips into the community, learning how to keep safe in a variety of situations. Students are made well aware of potential internet and social media bullying and how to avoid it.
- Incidents of bullying have significantly declined since last September and are now rare. Students are confident that they will be heard and that problems will be quickly dealt with. The school has effective systems to combat bullying, including counselling and the 'turnaround' room where students confront their own behaviour.

The quality of teaching is good

- Over the last year, since records were instituted systematically, there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching, especially as more teachers have been given permanent positions. Teaching is now almost always good and occasionally outstanding. As a result, the students, including those with additional needs, those from minority groups and the disadvantaged, achieve well.
- Senior and middle leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and provide effective coaching and further training if required. There are increasingly high expectations of teachers' performance, to which staff respond positively.
- Adults have correspondingly high expectations of the students. Activities challenge students to make the best progress that they can and are well planned to build on what the students know and understand. The most-able are stretched appropriately to achieve more highly. This good practice is not, however, fully

consistent through the school. On some occasions, teachers do not plan in sufficient detail to enable each student to make progress in the small steps of which they are capable. This can slow down their learning.

- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. The subject leaders, who are specialists, take most of the lessons. They have a good command of their subjects and ensure that teaching in these subjects is well planned and taught. Students make good progress in daily literacy sessions, particularly in practising the sounds and shapes of letters and words. Their reading is tested regularly and extra support provided, where necessary. Records show substantial improvements in the students' reading abilities over the year.
- The students read, write and practise number skills throughout the curriculum. These activities are planned into all lessons. As a result, the students reinforce their skills in a variety of contexts. This helps them to enhance their skills and adds to their enjoyment and learning in each subject. Work in students' books and in the many work displays around the school demonstrate their confidence and pride in showing their progress in English and mathematics.
- Teachers manage their classrooms effectively. Supporting adults are well briefed on what and how each student will learn and they give a high level of individual support to each student. Adults are skilled in adapting questions and activities to take account of each student's learning and understanding. As a result, students gain confidence to make mistakes and learn from them; this has a good impact on their progress.
- In most cases, teachers mark students' work thoroughly and make sure they 'sit down' with students to explain how well they have done and how they can improve. This has been effective in accelerating the students' progress. Sometimes, however, marking is a bit too superficial and students are not given sufficient guidance about how to improve. This can result in students repeating mistakes and thus making slower progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has no significant records of students' progress before September 2014. The interim headteacher introduced a comprehensive system of tracking students' performance. Initial assessments revealed that students entered the school with attainment well below that typically expected for their age. Their attainment in most cases remains below expectations.
- Despite this, most students in each year group have made good progress over the year. This is due to increasingly effective teaching and monitoring of their performance. The most-able are on track to achieve success in a range of GCSE qualifications, including English and mathematics, albeit at the lower levels.
- Almost all students make at least steady progress, and a growing number make very fast progress in English and mathematics. They make substantial gains in reading, writing and numeracy. This has enabled the most able to study confidently for GCSE qualifications in these subjects as well as in physical education (sport). This represents good achievement from their starting points. There is no early entry for GCSE examinations.
- Disadvantaged students have made progress at similar rates to others. There were initial gaps in performance in English, due largely to a lack of appropriate teaching. This has now been remedied through the employment of an experienced subject leader. As a result, students are now making generally rapid progress in English and closing the gap with other students.
- Students with additional learning difficulties have made comparable progress through extra individual support delivered by adults trained in delivering literacy and numeracy teaching. There are no differences in the achievement of students from minority ethnic groups or those for whom English is an additional language.
- Older students make good progress in work-related activities. They enjoy and derive benefit from work experience sessions and in learning about the world of work. These opportunities lead to vocational qualifications. All students are due to go on to college courses this summer. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100382
Local authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	462162

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie-Elise Howells
Headteacher	Alan Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 May 2013
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