



Highshore School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100872
Local Authority Southwark
Inspection number 285904
Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Kiran Campbell-Platt

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Bellenden Road
School category	Community special		Peckham
Age range of pupils	11–17		London SE15 5BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02076397211
Number on roll (school)	124	Fax number	02072529024
Number on roll (6th form)	9	Chair	Mrs Judith Lask
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Ms C Wood
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Highshore School is for pupils aged 11 to 17 with statements of special educational needs. It caters for complex needs including speech and communication difficulties, emotional and behavioural needs, Dyslexia and physical difficulties. Two thirds of the roll is boys. About half of the pupils are of white, British backgrounds with a third being of black heritage. A fifth of the roll has English as an additional language needs. Achievement at entry is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Highshore is a good school with some strong features. The inspection agrees with the school's judgement that overall effectiveness is good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership in her unwavering focus on improving pupils' outcomes and their well-being. The school has recently emerged from a difficult period when it operated without the full senior leadership team. This slowed the previously good pace of progress and delayed implementation of some plans for school improvement. It also reduced the effectiveness of behaviour management across the school. The senior leadership team has been strengthened by the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher and is now well placed to implement further improvement. Despite its recent difficulties, progress on issues for development from the last inspection has been good. Self-evaluation is now firmly linked to improving outcomes for pupils. Subject co-ordinators are actively involved in departmental self-evaluation; assessment information to inform whole school target setting is now in place; the school has been effective in raising the achievement of more able pupils through improved teaching and curriculum provision and their achievement is now good. Capacity to improve is good.

Achievement is good. Pupils enter school with low starting points and make good gains in learning. The school is accurate in its judgement that teaching and learning are good. Strong relationships and the positive ethos for learning are strengths of teaching. The school uses monitoring information effectively to improve its quality and is well-placed to make further improvement. Care, guidance and support are good. One parent said, "The staff are exceptional and extremely caring as well as being considerate of children." The school is very effective in harnessing the expertise of local services to promote pupils well-being. As a result, their personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school. A small but significant number of pupils with challenging behaviour are disruptive and this has resulted in a high number of fixed term exclusions. Overall pupils enjoy school, feel safe and participate well in sporting and the extra-curricular activities offered. They make an exceptionally strong contribution to the school and local community and progress well in developing life and work-related skills. The curriculum is good. It is well-matched to pupils needs and promotes their personal development.

The school has an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses overall but it has overestimated the quality of care, guidance and support and the personal development and well-being of pupils in view of the high number of fixed term exclusions. The actions taken by the school to reduce these exclusions through pastoral support plans, home visits by the Connexions adviser and Local Authority services are beginning to have an impact; however it needs to take rigorous action to reduce these swiftly as the annual targets currently set are not challenging enough. The school is aware that access for pupils with physical difficulties around the site and to classrooms on the first floor is unsatisfactory and needs to be addressed.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school has a small group of vulnerable students in Year 12 as part of a pilot Pathfinder programme set up in partnership with a local school. Achievement and social and personal development of students are good. All the students in the first year of the pilot gained a college, training or work placement. Teaching and care, guidance and support are good. The curriculum is well-matched to students' needs and includes ongoing college and work placements. It promotes basic and life skills and prepares them well for transition to college or training placements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take rigorous action to reduce fixed term exclusions.
- Improve access for pupils with physical difficulties around the site and to first floor classrooms.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is low compared with other learners of the same age because of their learning difficulties and, in some cases, complex needs and challenging behaviour. Despite their low starting points, pupils make good progress in their time at school. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good gains in developing their confidence as learners. They make good progress in improving their social and communication skills. Their written work is well presented and some older pupils are able to express their views in a variety of creative ways, for example, the posters created by Year 11 pupils for their English course work on Macbeth. Older students make steady progress in developing basic and life skills. Many are successful in achieving a range of accreditation including General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in art, entry level in a wide range of subjects and ASDAN Awards. Most students leaving at the end of Key Stage 4 take up college or training places. There is no significant difference in the progress made by different groups of learners, such as looked after children and those learning English as an additional language needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils progress well in improving their self-esteem, confidence and have positive attitudes to learning. The school is a harmonious community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are considerate of each others' feelings and courteous to staff and visitors. The school's ethos enables them to recognise right from wrong. Behaviour is generally good although some pupils with emotional and

behavioral difficulties behave inappropriately. Socially, pupils develop well; they get on with each other and are able to participate in group work. They say, and;quot;teachers have a laugh with youand;quot;, explaining why they enjoy school. Culturally, their development is good and promoted by very good enrichment activities such as celebrations of festivals, trips and concerts. High numbers participate in school sporting activities including local tournaments and extra curricular sports clubs. They have healthy options in school meals. They make a strong contribution to the school and local community through charitable fund raising, school fair and other activities. One pupil explained, and;quot;I walked around a lake,and;quot; for the sponsored walk in aid of Landmines. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with similar schools. Pupils act safely in the school and some older School Council members show good awareness of risk assessment and point out the poor access for pupils with physical difficulties to all parts of the school. Pupils progress well in skills that contribute to economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The majority of teaching observed was good with a small proportion being satisfactory. The school's monitoring identifies a small amount of outstanding teaching. Teachers typically use a wide range of methods and resources effectively to involve pupils and to enable them to understand what they are doing. Teachers make good use of projectors and interactive white boards which add to visual and practical learning which pupils enjoy. Teaching is purposeful and well-linked to pupils' prior knowledge and previous learning. Teachers and learning assistants are patient and consistent in managing students who find the work difficult. Praise is used effectively to encourage hesitant or less able students. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop communication and collaboration skills through pair and group activities. As a result most students make good progress. The school works well to help teachers to improve less effective teaching and is well placed to make further improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school offers the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, students have good opportunities for accreditation through GCSE Art and a wide range of entry level courses. There is specialist teaching for most subjects. The Personal, Health, Citizenship and Moral Education (PSHME) programme, and core programmes, help pupils to develop life and social skills and awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles. Vocational provision is good. It includes college and work placements and enterprise activities. The school makes good use of assessment information to improve curriculum

provision to match different needs, for example, for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) at Key Stage 4. More able pupils sit the Key Stage 3 national tests and those at Key Stage 4 are appropriately challenged through access to higher level accreditation, for example, the ASDAN Gold award. The school has good plans to modify the provision in Year 7 for increasing numbers of pupils with more complex needs. Some of the pupils at risk of exclusion in Years 10 and 11 have a personalised curriculum to promote re-engagement in learning. The school needs to accelerate its plans to provide personalised curriculum provision for all pupils who are repeatedly given fixed term exclusions. The school offers an enriched curriculum which includes, for example, links with a Dutch school for exchange visits, participation in Peckham Spash for music, drama and dance. The extra curricular activities offered are a strength. These include sporting activities, homework and breakfast clubs and musical activities such as drumming, all of which have high participation rates.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Staff are highly committed to providing a caring and safe environment for pupils. The school's partnership with local services and community based providers is a strength. It works very effectively with many external agencies to meet the needs of learners. These include local authority services such as the Connexions Service, Speech and Language therapy, Educational Psychology, specialist teachers for Hearing and Visual Impairment and the Educational Welfare Service. The school has a counsellor and a well-trained team of support assistants who provide valuable additional support and supervision in lessons and breaks. There is in-class or small group specialist support for pupils with Dyslexia, EAL needs, and those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Although the school has improved the support and guidance for pupils at risk of exclusion, it is aware that more rigorous action needs to be taken to re-engage the significant number who are repeatedly excluded. Partnership with parents is very good and their attendance at annual reviews is high. Pupil progress is monitored regularly through regular reviews of Individual Education Plans, annual reviews and teacher assessment. Individual target setting is currently an area for development as the school's recently introduced assessment system is being implemented in a rolling programme. Risk assessments, child protection procedures, CRB checks and Health and Safety assessments are carried out rigorously.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. She has led the school effectively since the previous inspection. She is supported by an experienced senior leadership team which is focused on making further improvement. Self-review is developing well and has had a positive impact on improving achievement

and well-being of pupils. Information from monitoring of teaching is used effectively to improve the quality of teaching. The school recognises that the high number of fixed term exclusions run counter to its ethos of inclusion. The actions it has taken are starting to have a positive impact. The school seeks the views of pupils, parents and staff to inform its priorities for development through surveys such as the Well-Being project and Future Proof audit. Its effective collaboration with external agencies to meet pupils' needs and promote pupils' well-being is reflected in their good personal and academic achievement. Resources are used efficiently reflected in good staff retention and effective training and deployment of teachers and support assistants. The school works well within the constraints of limited accommodation provided by the hall which restricts provision for PE, other sporting activities and drama. However, it is aware of the urgent need to improve access for pupils with physical difficulties to first floor classrooms which can only be accessed by stairs. There are effective financial systems in place. Governors play a strategic role and are actively involved in supporting the school through visits and review of the school improvement plan. The school provides good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school this week. I enjoyed seeing you in your lessons and talking to you. I was impressed by the confident and courteous way with which you greeted me in lessons and around school. I was pleased to meet with some of the members of your School Council and to hear what they thought about the school. I think you will see from the full report that I have taken your views into account.

I am writing to let you know my main findings. Highshore School provides a good education for you. Most of you make good progress in your learning. You told me that you enjoy lessons and feel safe. Most of you have positive attitudes to learning. You like the different methods that teachers use for class work. You have good relationships with each other and with your teachers. You behave well in lessons and in breaks. Your school provides you with a good range of learning activities during lessons. You benefit from the many after-school clubs like the breakfast and homework clubs and musical activities such as drumming. All the staff are very committed to helping you to learn and make good progress in your personal and social development.

There are some things that the school could do better. I have asked the school to do more to bring down the numbers of pupils who are given fixed term exclusions. I have also asked the school to improve the access to the first floor classes and across the school for pupils with physical difficulties.

Thank you again and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Kiran Campbell-Platt

Lead inspector