

Heathside School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125309
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359885
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Metcalf

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	1,273
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Lake
Principal	Anne Cullum
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2008
School address	Brooklands Lane Weybridge KT13 8UZ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors over two days. They observed 38 lessons and 35 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, governors and students. Inspectors looked at a range of data and documentation, including the school development plan, school policies, assessment data, safeguarding documentation and governing body minutes. The responses to questionnaires completed by staff, students and 235 parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- To what extent does evidence from lesson observations, work scrutiny and available data support the school's judgment about attainment and progress?
- Is the quality of teaching securing sufficient progress for all students, especially boys?
- Does the curriculum meet all students' needs and what is the impact of specialist status on learners' outcomes?
- How well does care, guidance and support promote learning and personal development for all students?
- How effectively are leaders securing improvement through self-evaluation and their capacity to sustain these improvements?

Information about the school

Heathside School is a larger-than-average community college in an area of social advantage, as evident in the fact that the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, although an average proportion speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is well below the national average. The school is affiliated to the Diocese of Guildford and its values and ethos are broadly Christian in character. Heathside became a specialist technology college in 1995 with a second specialism in modern foreign languages in 2009. The school achieved Healthy School status in 2006.

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

Heathside School is an outstanding school. Under the dynamic and determined leadership of the Principal, there has been considerable improvement in provision and outcomes since the previous inspection, when the school was found to be a very good and improving school.

Students enjoy the wealth of opportunities provided by the school and their achievement is outstanding. Attainment is high and students make increasingly good progress. The school's mission to value all individuals and enable them to achieve their full potential underpins all of its work. Students' behaviour is outstanding and they have a strong sense of pride in the school, as expressed by one student who said, 'We are Heathside.' Students feel extremely safe and speak highly of the considerable efforts made by staff to ensure their well-being. Healthy lifestyles are well supported through food technology and sport but students admit that they do not always eat healthy options. Attendance has improved and is now above average.

The school's specialisms in technology and modern foreign languages make an extensive contribution to students' experiences and outcomes. There is an enviable wealth of links with businesses and the community. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. They show an impressive degree of empathy for people in different communities and take effective action to support them in practical ways, including strong links with schools in Brazil, Ethiopia, India and Singapore. Overall, they make an outstanding contribution to the community. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is good overall; an increasing proportion is outstanding but the school is correctly working to increase this as a key priority. Lessons are planned well and teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge as well as a very good awareness of examination requirements. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and most lessons are very enjoyable, with some that are inspirational. In a small number of lessons, teachers do not make sufficient use of available data to provide tasks which are suited to the spread of ability in the class. The sixth form is highly effective and as such is outstanding overall.

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets all pupils' needs very well and ensures memorable and rich opportunities for good and sometimes outstanding academic and personal development. Excellent partnerships facilitate exciting and innovative

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events and projects such as designing a prosthetic limb in conjunction with Royal Holloway College.

Outstanding care, guidance and support contribute a great deal to students' all-round learning and personal development, especially their security, enjoyment, participation and achievement. The Principal and senior leadership team are innovative and effective. Their powerful vision of excellence is shared across the school and the community. They have developed a culture of high expectations, encouragement and support so that all staff work together to drive the school forward. School self-evaluation is exceedingly accurate and the school knows exactly what to do further to sustain improvement. Leaders are always ambitious to do the very best for the students. There is an exceptionally clear track record of improvement since the previous inspection and an absence of any complacency confirms that the school has outstanding capacity to sustain further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding lessons still further by:
 - making better use of data to ensure that there is a sharper match of work to students' prior attainment and skills
 - making better use of questioning to challenge more students and to check their understanding of the work
 - giving students more responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to be more active and inquisitive in class.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students' achievement is outstanding. In 2010, the percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics was significantly above national averages. The proportion of students gaining A* and A grades is high and there was little variation between performance in subjects.

Learning and progress are good because students' excellent behaviour creates the right climate for learning, enabling lessons to progress smoothly and at a brisk pace. In most lessons observed, the quality of learning was at least good and students demonstrated engagement and commitment to their work, as evidenced in a Year 10 English lesson, where students assessed each other's work and then wrote a mark scheme for a piece of writing.

School data, lesson observations and samples of work confirm that students make good progress. This includes those learning English as an additional language as well as students with special educational needs and or/disabilities, whose needs are met through high quality personalised intervention and additional support. For example in a Year 9 music lesson higher-attaining students supported other students in composing arrangements of a Beatles song, thus ensuring good progress and effective learning.

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Discussions with students and responses to questionnaires confirm that they enjoy school and feel extremely safe. Exclusion rates are low and students' outstanding behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning. The school achieved Healthy School status in 2006 and students are aware of healthy eating. They participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons and there is a large take-up for extra-curricular sport. Large numbers of students cycle to school each day.

The school is affiliated to the Diocese of Guildford and the Christian ethos of the school equips students with strong moral principles and skills to help them make choices. Their spiritual sense is exemplified in their willingness to engage with acts of worship. They demonstrate empathy and respect for each other, as well as for other cultural heritages, as evidenced in their generous contributions within the school and beyond the school. Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and engagement with students and their learning is good. Expectations are high and relationships between teachers and students are very supportive. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a good awareness of examination requirements which they share with students. In the best lessons, students are actively involved in their learning and are encouraged to be more inquisitive and ask probing questions. In these lessons, teachers use questioning to explore answers and challenge their students. However, in a small number of lessons, students have limited opportunities to contribute or discover for themselves

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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as question-and-answer sessions are too brief and teacher talk dominates the lesson.

Assessment is good and teachers’ marking offers useful feedback on how students might improve. Students are well aware of their target grades and know exactly what to do to meet them. Data are used well to track the progress of individual students and support any who are potentially underperforming against expectations. All staff have access to the available data, but occasionally a few staff do not make best use of this in planning lessons which are matched to students’ prior attainment and skills.

The outstanding curriculum is relevant to the needs of individuals and groups of students, and promotes their good progress. It is continually reviewed and developed to meet the needs of students. The specialist subjects play an important role in ensuring that the curriculum contains a range of meaningful experiences. Cross-curricular skills, especially literacy and numeracy, are firmly embedded in all subjects. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are extensive and wide-ranging, with high numbers of students involved.

Students agree that the quality of care, guidance and support they receive is a major strength of the school. They are particularly appreciative of the transition arrangements from primary to secondary school and from secondary to post-16 education, training and work. Students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are exceptionally well supported and nurtured so that they can fully enjoy and benefit from what the school offers. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance for students, including careers advice, are excellent and partnerships with external agencies enable students to access a range of services to help them make choices with regard to their own lifestyles and futures.

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?

As a result of the Principal’s skilful leadership and the mutually supportive senior leadership team, there is a common sense of vision and drive to do the very best for the students. Leaders, at all levels, have a very clear understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. The extensive and wide-ranging school development plan provides a blueprint for their vision of the school as a centre of excellence. Leadership is relentless in its drive to improve the quality of teaching and there are strong systems in place, including regular formal and informal lesson observations. Feedback and the sharing of good practice have improved

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teaching so that the large majority of lessons are now consistently good, with an increasing proportion that are outstanding.

The governing body, which includes extensive representation from businesses and the community, makes an exceptional contribution to the work and direction of the school. Detailed committee minutes confirm their involvement in all areas of the school, from catering contracts to professional development, as well as evaluating the implementation of statutory policies and engaging effectively with staff, students and parents. They are increasingly confident in providing high levels of professional challenge to hold the school to account.

Equality of opportunity permeates the school’s values and beliefs so that outcomes for all groups of students, given their different starting points, are broadly similar, and any differences are quickly identified and addressed. Lower-attaining boys, whose performance was identified as an area for improvement by the school, now make good progress as a result of tracking and additional support. Higher-attaining students are now being successfully targeted to further increase the proportion of A* and A grades, which is already significantly above national averages. The main reason why equal opportunities is graded as good rather than outstanding is because lesson planning, although well considered, does not always take sufficient account of the available data to effectively cater for the whole spread of ability. Discrimination of any form is not tolerated. Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally robust and rigorously implemented throughout the school, with leaders sharing best practice widely with other professionals.

The school is highly committed to working in partnership with others, through a range of activities associated with the school’s specialisms, including support for partner primary schools. The school works decisively to engage itself with a range of community groups to support its commitment to promote community cohesion and increase students’ understanding of the diverse cultures in the school and wider community, including developing links with a school in Southall. The views of parents and carers are regularly sought through questionnaires, forums and parental consultations, leading to seminars covering topics such as ‘internet safety’ and ‘living with a teenager’.

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	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	2

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and tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Students' achievement in the sixth form is outstanding, with notable successes in business studies and critical thinking. Students enter the sixth form with attainment which is similar to other sixth forms but with a greater proportion of higher attainers. All students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make significant progress in relation to their starting points. Pass rates, retention rates and attendance are high. Students make an exceptionally positive contribution to the school and appreciate the opportunities to involve themselves through the prefect system or else supporting younger students in the learning resource centre. Outside of school, they undertake voluntary work within the local community, including the local hospice, retirement homes and charity shops.

Teaching and assessment are used effectively to enable students to learn well, and a few lessons are inspirational but, like the rest of the school, there is room for even more outstanding teaching. Relationships are very strong and teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge as well as a passion and enthusiasm for their subject. Students receive constructive feedback on their progress and how they might improve. Curriculum programmes and activities are highly effective in meeting students' individual needs, with considerable opportunities to experience leadership and service. Care, guidance and support are outstanding, with students benefiting considerably from the advice given and most attaining their first-choice university course. Taking all features of provision together, they lead to outstanding outcomes for students and, as such, provision is very impressive overall.

Leadership and management are outstanding, with a relentless drive to enhance outcomes for students and highly effective planning to improve study skills, support university applications and extend opportunities to serve the wider school and community. Engagement with students, parents/carers and partners makes an excellent contribution to the students' improving outcomes.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	1
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

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Views of parents and carers

The Ofsted questionnaire was returned by a very small minority of the school's parents and carers. Of those that responded, the very large majority of responses were positive and supportive of the school. Most said that their child enjoyed school and that the school kept them safe. A very large majority of parents felt that teaching was good. A very small minority commented about unacceptable behaviour and a few felt that the school did not take sufficient account of their suggestions and concerns. A small number of written responses commented on the lack of communication but the inspection team were impressed with the quality of the reports and the use of the website to communicate with parents. A few parents mentioned a lack of support for healthy lifestyles and this was confirmed in questionnaires from students. A very large majority of parents and carers agreed with the statement that the school was led and managed effectively, with many supporting the sentiment that 'Heathside is a really excellent school'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Heathside 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 235 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1273 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	102	43	127	54	16	7	4	2
The school keeps my child safe	105	45	135	57	6	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	60	26	155	66	24	10	8	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	86	37	132	56	20	9	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	69	29	156	66	14	6	2	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	47	20	147	63	40	17	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	20	144	61	40	17	5	2
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)	65	28	138	59	16	7	4	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	68	29	133	57	31	13	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	70	30	136	58	24	10	8	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	18	141	60	29	12	7	3
The school is led and managed effectively	67	29	152	65	16	7	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	82	35	142	60	16	7	6	3

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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.



11 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Heathside School, Weybridge KT13 8UZ

On behalf of the inspection team I am writing to thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school and to tell you about our findings during the inspection.

We concluded that Heathside School provides you with an outstanding education and that you are right to be very proud of your school. We were pleased to read your positive responses to the student questionnaire and to hear that you enjoy school and feel exceptionally safe. We agreed that safeguarding procedures are outstanding and the care, guidance and support provided by the school are also outstanding.

Examination results are high and we were pleased to see the good progress that you are making and how well you understand what you need to do to improve. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the leadership of the school is outstanding. We have every confidence that, with your continued help, the school will continue to grow from strength to strength.

We have asked your teachers to further increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making better use of data and improving the use of questioning. We have also asked them to give you more responsibility for your learning by encouraging you to be more active and inquisitive in class.

Once again, thank you for your contribution to the inspection and very best wishes for your future success and happiness.

Yours sincerely

Paul Metcalf
Lead Inspector

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