



Claremont High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 101557
 LEA Brent LEA
 Inspection number 286109
 Inspection dates 5 - 6 October 2006
 Reporting inspector Dr Stuart Charlton

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

Type of School	secondary	School address	Claremont Avenue, Kenton
School category	foundation		Harrow HA3 0UH
Age range of pupils	11 - 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	08703500093
Number on roll	1470	Fax number	02082043548
Number on roll (6th form)	357		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of Governors	Mrs Stephanie Cooper
		Headteacher	Mr Terry Molloy
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection Date(s)	Inspection No.
11 - 18	5 - 6 October 2006	286109

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Claremont High School is of above-average size serving a mixed multi-ethnic student population. Just over half are of Indian ethnicity with White British, Black Caribbean and Pakistani making up significant minority groups. Most students are drawn from the relatively affluent local community but a significant, and increasing, minority come from other more deprived areas. Student attainment on entry is broadly average. Since 2001, the school has held specialist status in performing arts and in April 2006 was awarded similar status in mathematics and computing.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Claremont High School is a good school with outstanding features. The way in which it ensures that all students are fully involved in all aspects of school life is at the heart of its success. It is held in high regard by its students and comments such as 'There are no barriers between staff and students' and 'Everyone is here for each other' show the very good relationships which exist.

There is an overall trend of improvement in examination results for students aged 14 and at GCSE. In 2006, 78% of pupils achieved five or more good GCSE grades, an improvement of nearly 10% on 2005. These results are well above the national average. All students make good progress and achieve well. This good achievement is based on good teaching and a very strong curriculum which is well matched to student's needs and aspirations. Mathematics is a particular strength of the school with a much higher than expected number of students achieving the highest grades at GCSE. The specialist provision in mathematics is already having an impact as the close setting strategies used in this subject are adopted in other subjects such as English. The school successfully enables all students regardless of their background to achieve well.

The headteacher and senior management team have a very clear view of the direction in which they want the school to develop. They have established very good systems to track student's progress and ensure that effective steps are taken to develop and support student's learning. A detailed analysis of the 2005 results identified that student's literacy skills were not as well developed as other learning skills, notably in numeracy. Strategies to improve these skills have been put in place over the past year. The rise in this year's GCSE results in English show that this support is beginning to pay dividends. Although teaching is good throughout the school, not all teachers use assessment information well to target improvement for individual students. Nevertheless, the seeds have been sown to raise students' achievements even further.

The way in which the school develops students' personal qualities is outstanding. This is based on the excellent programme for personal development and the high level of care which is provided. Behaviour is exemplary and sets an excellent climate for learning. The work in performing arts is an outstanding and very distinctive feature of the school. Through this, students make outstanding contributions to the local community by theatrical productions, music and dance. Those in the sixth form provide highly effective support for younger students through the paired reading scheme and peer mentoring programmes. All students are regularly involved in fund raising events. Based on such activities, student's moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The recently introduced college assemblies make a strong contribution to students' very good spiritual development. The school encourages students well to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Attendance is good and students enjoy their learning very much. One student commented 'I enjoy coming to school because lessons are fun and we learn a lot'.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is good. The curriculum is very good and, linked with good teaching, enables all students to make good

progress and achieve well. Consequently, places are over-subscribed. The wide range of the curriculum ensures that many students who have lower than average attainment at GCSE are able to be placed on courses which are very well matched to their needs and aspirations. The excellent care provided in the main school links seamlessly with that in the sixth form. The programmes are well managed with very good support from senior managers. As in the main school, the development of students' literacy skills is a priority.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve students' skills in literacy so that they are as well developed as those in other areas, particularly numeracy.
- Ensure that teachers use their assessments to fully target improvement for individual students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school successfully enables all students of different backgrounds and abilities to achieve well and it meets or exceeds its challenging targets. Results for students aged 14 and those at GCSE have shown a trend of improvement since the last inspection which is better than the national average. Across the school, mathematics is a particular strength and student's skills in numeracy support their learning in other subjects, such as science, very well indeed. A thorough review of the 2005 examination results identified students' literacy skills needed to be improved and a senior manager with responsibility for literacy across the curriculum has been appointed. Already initiatives taken throughout the year have led to improvements in GCSE results in subjects such as English and geography.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding in both the main school and the sixth form. Students are polite, articulate and have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Their excellent behaviour and above average attendance rate reflect their enjoyment of learning, as does their willingness to contribute to all areas of school life. Students show a very well developed understanding of how to keep safe and live healthily. All students make excellent contributions to the wider community, and older students support their younger peers exceptionally well. Students effectively develop the skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Across the school, teaching is good. This is based on very good relationships and effective planning which makes learning interesting and exciting. Staff encourage pupils in their learning and use a wide range of techniques to make learning enjoyable. Students know that they can go to staff if they need help. Staff manage students' behaviour very well so that as you walk around the school you see students well engaged in their tasks. Teachers are skilled in identifying the levels which individual students have achieved. However, some teachers are less successful in using this information to target improvement for individual students.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is very good and it has outstanding features. It is highly inclusive and well matched to the needs and aspirations of all students. For example, in Years 10 and 11 students can choose to follow an academic route, a vocational one, or mix elements of each. The sixth-form curriculum is very effectively designed to provide worthwhile learning for all who wish to enrol. The school has good systems to ensure that students with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully involved in the curriculum. The work in performing arts is an outstanding and very distinctive feature, allowing many students to develop talents they might not have discovered in more traditional courses. In addition, a wide range of subjects have benefited from projects based upon planning and creating theatrical performances. Enrichment is very good overall and in the sixth form it is outstanding. The provision for student's personal, social and health education is very strong. The school has recently introduced a programme to improve students' literacy skills across all subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has excellent systems to promote student's personal and social development and those to support their academic development are good. Procedures for safeguarding students are robust. The school links extremely well with partner primary schools to make sure that new students settle quickly and happily into Year 7. Outstanding careers education, including extensive input from business representatives, guides students to make informed choices about their future. There are good systems to collect data about students' achievements and these are now available to all staff through the school's Intranet. Not all staff make consistent use of the information to target support for individual students that would enable them to improve further. The school has good systems for identifying students with learning difficulties and disabilities and these ensure that the progress of these students is similar to that of other groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with some outstanding features. The school is extremely successful in identifying and tackling any barriers to learning for students who come from very diverse backgrounds. The headteacher

provides very strong leadership and along with senior managers is very clear about how the school should build on its considerable strengths. Governors and staff working at all levels fully support this direction. The views of students, parents and other stakeholders are used well to guide decision making. Recent initiatives, such as those focussed on literacy and assessment, are very well focused, but are yet to have full impact. The school's systems for self-evaluation are rigorous and robust and give an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Since the last inspection, the astute ways in which the school evaluates its performance has enabled it to raise standards and demonstrates good capacity for future improvement. The school's specialisms, particularly that in performing arts, are used very effectively to raise students' achievements in other subjects and create excellent links with other institutions. A very strong aspect of the school's work is the importance it attaches to staff training and development which is having a marked impact on the quality of teaching and learning and leading to higher student achievement. The sixth form is well led and managed and effectively supported by the school's senior management team.

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Annex A to the inspection report

Inspection Judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NA	
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	2	2
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	

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Annex A to the inspection report

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
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 learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

Annex A to the inspection report

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	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
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	

Annex B to the inspection report

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

18 October 2006

Dear Students

Claremont High School
Claremont Avenue
Kenton
Harrow
HA3 0UH



Thank you for all the help you gave the inspection team during our visit on 5 and 6 October 2006. You were very clear that you think Claremont is a good school with some areas that are extremely strong. We agree with you and consider that you are absolutely right about the particular strengths in performing arts and mathematics. The older students are rightly proud of the sixth form and the way in which it helps to prepare them for life after school. Younger students were full of praise for the way in which the sixth formers help them with paired reading and mentoring.

The headteacher, the senior staff, teachers and governors all work with a clear sense of purpose to ensure that you make good progress and achieve well in examinations. You captured an important factor in the school's success when you told us that 'There are no barriers between staff and students' and 'Everyone is here for each other.' You develop your personal skills extremely well. You clearly enjoy your lessons because teaching is good and your teachers try to make them interesting. The older students in the school and those in the sixth form have a wide range of programmes available to them which allow them to mix academic and vocational courses.

The school is encouraging you to improve your literacy skills and apply them in the other subjects you are studying to the same good effect that you use your number skills. You must all make sure that you concentrate on this aspect of your work. We have also asked your teachers to pay special attention to giving each of you detailed information about how to improve your work so that you can achieve even better examination results.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Charlton
Lead inspector