



# The Grey Coat Hospital

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 101151  
 LEA Westminster

Inspection number 276462  
 Inspection dates 16-17 November  
 Reporting inspector Scott Harrison HMI

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

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	Grey Coat Place
School category	Voluntary Aided		London
Age range of pupils	11-18		SW1P 2DY
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	0207 969 1998
Number on roll	1024	Fax number	0207 828 2697
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Lady Laws
Date of previous inspection	November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs R Allard

<b>Age group</b> 11-18	<b>Published</b> December 2005	<b>Reference no.</b> 276462
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Grey Coat Hospital was established as a school in 1698 on the site of an Elizabethan workhouse and became a day school for girls in 1874. It has strong traditions, including its Christian foundation and ethos, but also aims to equip its pupils to 'meet the challenges of the twenty-first century'; it became a specialist language school in 2002. The school is of average size and has a diverse intake, with half of the pupils from minority ethnic groups and one fifth whose first language is not English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is around average. The school has a fully comprehensive intake, but attainment on entry is above average and there are lower than average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Recent changes to the admission policy provide more places for pupils from the local community and for the admission of more from faiths other than Christian.

## Key for inspection grades

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

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## Overall effectiveness of the school

The school's leadership team judges the overall effectiveness of the school to be good. Inspectors find the school to be overly self-critical in this respect, and judge it to be outstanding. With very few exceptions, parents agree that the school is providing high quality education. The school's very good reputation is well deserved. It gives outstanding value for money.

Pupils' achievement is very good; they do better than might be expected, accepting the challenge offered by the school to 'take charge of their own learning'. They achieve very well because they enjoy their lessons and work hard. There is very little poor behaviour. The school is a harmonious community where girls cooperate well, take responsibility and make the most of the many opportunities available to them for enrichment of their school experience. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are interesting and challenging and with a strong emphasis on learning through discussion. The procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching are excellent.

This is an outstanding school because of the high quality of its leadership. The headteacher is very well supported by a leadership team that operates very effectively to maintain the school's strengths while driving forward initiatives to promote further improvement. This effectiveness derives from a clear and shared vision amongst the governors and staff. The school's self evaluation is full and accurate. The school has improved well since the last inspection and has good capacity to continue this improvement.

The school knows what it needs to do. There has been a considerable investment in information and communication technology (ICT), and more is anticipated, but ICT does not yet have the place that it might as a regular feature of learning across the curriculum. The vocational programme in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is still relatively limited, and consideration is being given to its development. The school has already revised its approach to the provision National Curriculum citizenship, but recognises that more needs to be done, especially in Key Stage 4, to produce a curriculum that is full and coherent.

**Grade: 1**

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Inspectors agree with the school that the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are outstanding. Its profile, reputation and performance are excellent, and it is a popular choice for students from other schools. In the lessons seen, teaching was consistently good and often outstanding. Students know clearly what they need to do in order to improve. As a result most

achieve very well given their prior attainment, with many students successfully gaining a place at university.

The school makes excellent provision for care and guidance, and for students' personal development overall. Sixth form students make major contributions to the life of the school by acting as role models and mentors to younger pupils.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are highly effective, and very good value for money is secured.

## **Grade: 1**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend the use of ICT. In doing so develop pupils' ICT capability across the curriculum and using it more regularly to enhance learning in all subjects
- Expand the vocational curriculum as an attractive alternative for pupils in Key Stage 4 and sixth formers
- Develop the citizenship curriculum.

### **Achievement and standards**

Pupils achieve very well and reach high standards. This confirms the school's judgements. There is a clear upward trend in test and examination results, well above the national average. The school tracks pupils' progress very effectively, which allows it to identify individual needs and set challenging but achievable targets. All groups of pupils achieve very well, including pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties.

Pupils make very good progress in Years 7 to 9 and attain well above average standards in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3. Of the three core subjects, they make most progress in English. As the test results in mathematics dipped in 2004, the school took effective action to raise attainment. This led to an improvement in results in 2005. The results in science have also improved but, like mathematics, lag some way behind English.

Pupils' high rate of progress continues as they move up the school. At the end of Key Stage 4, their attainment in many subjects in GCSE is significantly higher than national averages. Results have been consistently very good in English, history, design and technology, and physical education. In 2005, within a picture of general improvement, there were particular gains in art, Business

Studies, Latin and statistics. As in Key Stage 3, Mathematics and science results are less good than English.

In the sixth form the standards are very high and achievement is outstanding in a range of subjects. During the inspection excellence was seen in several lessons where students demonstrated very good understanding of complex concepts.

**Grade: 2**

## **Personal development and well-being**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils speak with confidence and pride about their school: they enjoy their lessons and work together in a harmonious community. Attendance is good, and many pupils additionally join in the rich range of extra-curricular activities made available for them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of the school. Pupils have a clear sense of fairness and respect the views of others. They learn about different cultures both in school and through extensive international links and exchange programmes. They make a positive contribution to the community.

Pupils' behaviour is very good overall, although a very small number of parents and pupils cited instances of poorer behaviour. Pupils report that bullying is rare and when it does occur they know it is taken seriously and dealt with swiftly. They feel safe and well supported by staff. Younger pupils say that they are made welcome at the school; older students are friendly and helpful. A buddy system helps those new to the school to settle in quickly. Pupils know the importance of healthy lifestyles and regularly monitor their own fitness levels.

The school council is active and pupils can offer examples of how their suggestions have been taken up by the school: for example, there are now healthier meals at lunchtime, and, as one pupil put it 'chips only once a week as a treat'. Even so, some school council procedures are informal, when tutor groups might be expected to operate to a common set of rules.

**Grade: 1**

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## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

Inspectors agree with the school that the overall quality of teaching is very high; several outstanding lessons were observed. Pupils experience a wide range of learning styles which makes them think and builds their understanding; they have a very high level of engagement in their lessons. In Key Stage 4 and the sixth form there is an appropriate but not excessive focus on the needs of examination courses. Teachers demonstrate great enthusiasm for and expertise in their subject and this helps to promote the strong motivation in the pupils. The teachers know the pupils well so most of the work is well matched to their differing needs. The recent focus of the school on aspects of teaching is bearing fruit: learning objectives are clear and questioning takes pupils forward by exploring ideas in depth. Some good use is being made of interactive whiteboards, and increasingly teachers are using ICT well to prepare for and support their teaching. Homework is currently a school priority and is generally regular and purposeful.

In a minority of lessons the teaching does not reach these high standards because, for example, there is a lack of clarity about the purpose of the lesson, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged or the available time is not used to the optimum.

The quality of assessment is very high. On a day to day basis, pupils receive very good feedback on their work and a clear indication of what they need to do to improve. The school's procedures provide pupils, teachers and parents with detailed data on progress and targets which are used well by the school to identify individual issues or trends.

**Grade: 2**

### Curriculum and other activities

The school has a very good curriculum that provides a broad range of subjects and activities matched to the needs and interests of all its pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language.

The school is taking positive steps to increase the range of vocational opportunities available, and to capitalise upon its specialist language school status, for example through the introduction of Mandarin. Students in the sixth form benefit significantly from an extensive range of subjects available through consortium arrangements with local partner schools.

The school provides an extensive and imaginative range of activities that extend and enrich pupils' learning experiences, at school and within the local community. These are extremely popular with pupils and contribute significantly to their overall achievement and personal development. Pupils are actively encouraged to stay healthy and safe.

Very good provision is made for work-related learning through work experience and enterprise activities, and through links with the financial sector of the City of London. Together these provide an effective preparation for pupils' future economic well-being.

Good provision is made to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils. For ICT this is satisfactory, but needs further development. The school has taken steps to introduce a programme of work for the National Curriculum in citizenship, but more remains to be done, particularly at Key Stage 4.

## **Grade 2**

### **Care, guidance and support**

The care, guidance and support the school provides are outstanding, and reflect the particular ethos of the school. Assemblies are used very well to support this ethos and to celebrate pupils' achievement. Pupils feel safe and secure because staff know them very well. There are rigorous procedures to ensure their welfare and safety and regular risk assessments are carried out. Child protection procedures are clear and understood.

Robust support systems which help pupils who are new to the school to settle in quickly are in place. A travel club developed by students in the sixth form helps new pupils arrive at school safely and on time.

Pupils are set challenging learning targets and know what they need to do to achieve them. Their progress is monitored rigorously so that those who need further support are identified. They understand how they can get help and support if needed; and appreciate the practical support given to them in preparation for higher education and the world of work.

## **Grade: 1**

### **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher is a very strong influence on the positive ethos and direction of the school. She is supported extremely well by the senior leadership team and

together they provide outstanding leadership and a shared vision, which is strongly focused on raising standards. The leadership and management of the Sixth Form are also exceptional. This flagship centre sets a clear agenda for high standards and plays a strong role in setting the pace for the rest of the school. Heads of department and others in the middle tier of leadership are also highly effective and work hard to support the senior leadership team. The governing body plays a vital role as the 'critical friend' of the school; governors know the school well and have a strong impact. Financial planning is very good and the school has successfully eradicated a previous budget deficit.

Senior staff, Advanced Skills Teachers and external consultants play a pivotal role in supporting staff professional development. School procedures in this regard are highly effective in ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning and other aspects of provision remain consistently good.

There are clear links between school self-review, improvement planning and staff professional development. Although the success criteria in the school improvement plan might more precisely demonstrate the intended impact on provision or standards, the annual school self-review process is very thorough and the views of all stake holders are considered. Links between outside agencies are extensive and contribute significantly to providing a rich and exciting curriculum.

The school has made good progress in tackling issues identified in the previous inspection. The school provides exceptional value for money and has very good capacity to improve.

**Grade: 1**