

Southover Partnership School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Southover Partnership School, in the London Borough of Barnet, provides full-time education for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years. All students have been placed by local authorities and all have statements of special educational needs. There are 13 students on roll. All the students have a wide range of behavioural, social, emotional and educational needs. The school aims to 'personalise and tailor students' education to ensure that they gain the most out of the school experience, from academic achievements, through to vocational skills and building personal relationships.' The school opened on 29 August 2007 and was last inspected in June 2008. The school operates on three main sites in Barnet, Enfield and Haringey but there are plans in place to move to one new site as soon as possible.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good education for its students and successfully addresses their needs, helping them to make good all-round progress. The curriculum is good, has outstanding breadth and captures the interest of all students. Senior leaders and staff have an excellent knowledge of their students and this underpins the good provision for welfare, health and safety. There is a determination to help students to overcome barriers to learning and succeed. Senior leaders and all staff are very alert to issues concerned with the welfare of students and safeguarding arrangements are robust. The school meets all of the regulations and has maintained its good provision. The school now has a plan which meets the regulatory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which is an improvement since the last inspection.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and results in students making good progress overall both in academic and personal development. It is outstanding in its breadth and meets the needs and interests of students who have not previously succeeded in other schools. There is sufficient flexibility in the curriculum to enable students to follow individually tailored programmes, nearly all of which lead to accreditation at an appropriate level. This has increased students' chances of reaching their preferred next steps when

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

they leave. All students leave with some nationally recognised accreditation for their studies. The school has been able to provide for very specific requests from students such as the chance to learn Spanish, Latin and geology. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used successfully across the curriculum, for example, to support student's writing, for composing music, developing art ideas and science. Provision is supported by a wide range of visits, often individually tailored, which successfully helps raise students' awareness of British culture and heritage as well as support their personal development and sense of responsibility effectively. English and mathematics have due prominence and students' creative talents are developed successfully through art, music, drama and photography. Students have developed portfolios of attractive artwork and photography. There is regular physical education (PE) including opportunities to swim. 'The curriculum is enhanced through partnership with Work Skills Learning This is an organisation which provides activities including ceramics, ICT projects, music, cooking and gardening, enriching learning and increasing students' enjoyment and their all round development. In the last school year students were able to visit a centre that uses equine therapy. This was an additional curricular strand to help develop personal skills of empathy and partnership working.

Where possible, students take GCSE examinations. Higher attaining pupils gained up to seven GCSE grades A* to C in 2011. All students gained accreditation for English and mathematics at GCSE or entry level. All have previously had very disrupted schooling and therefore there are large gaps in their learning and they are having to 'catch up'. A few students start at the school with average academic abilities but most arrive with achievements that are well below the expected level. Although by the time they leave students have made good progress, the quality of learning and progress is variable from day to day. This reflects the volatility of students' moods and feelings each day. Students make better progress in their knowledge and understanding of subjects than they do, for example, in writing at length and consistently completing well-presented work. Students are sometimes reluctant to record their work.

The planned weekly timetable is organised into 'blocks' of time and this helps to ensure that the full range of the curriculum is covered but it is not always sufficiently flexible to quickly adapt and enable a short-term rescheduling to replace key lessons missed, for example, through student absence.

Teaching and assessment are good. There is strong respect between students and staff and this leads to calm lessons. In most lessons students are working individually, often with two or more adults. Staff are excellent role models. Teachers and teaching assistants show good team work. This enables lessons to be successful in helping students learn effectively. Staff manage any outbursts of poor behaviour consistently and effectively, in a non-confrontational way; always with the aim to keep students safe and re-focus them on learning as soon as possible. The individual teaching allows for an informal dialogue between staff and students, often necessary to encourage good learning. Teachers ask good questions to find out what students

know and in the best examples students are given time to answer and are encouraged to explain accurately and say more than a few words. This has been an area of development for the school. Conversations between staff and students during lessons play an important role by providing opportunities for students to discuss their general feelings, and attitudes to learning, to bring about improvement. This supports the personal and social development of students and effectively complements the overall planned programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach confidently. They successfully plan individual programmes for students. The learning objectives for specific lessons however, are sometimes too broad and do not identify the small steps in learning necessary to meet specific targets. There are examples of good marking but the quality is variable between teachers. Students' achievements are regularly assessed using nationally standardised tests and levels. Detailed short-term assessment that measures students' smaller steps in learning is not yet fully established.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. The school is highly successful in helping students develop and refine their personal skills. Students gradually build their self-esteem especially through their creative studies but also through the regular celebration of success. The school's work centres very much on helping students to create good relationships, develop self-control and responsibility which is evident in improved behaviour, better attendance and more positive attitudes to learning. Students' responses in their questionnaires were positive about the school and what it provides for them though some were concerned about behaviour. During the inspection behaviour was mostly good. Despite some outbursts, students improve their behaviour and successfully start to better manage their feelings and emotions. Although attendance remains low for some students, it is improving and is very much better than at their previous schools. The school is very diligent in following up any absences. Developing tolerance for others and their views is a key area of the school's work. Although much of their study is individual, students do mix during break times and during other school occasions. Over time students successfully develop their social skills. A focus this year has been the Olympic and Paralympic values. Students have taken part in the London-wide project, Make Your Mark. In partnership with an architect and photographer, students designed a fitting monument to represent Olympic values. Students develop a satisfactory understanding of their own and others' cultures. This knowledge comes through the PSHE programme, 'themes of the month' and discussions about current affairs. Daily papers are always available. There are visits to places of interest such as theatres and museums, as well as to sporting venues for more adventurous activities. Students learn about and celebrate festivals within the school community and have participated in workshops such as the Holocaust Memorial Day. Students regularly take part in fund raising for charity and once per

year sell, in the local community, attractive ceramic products that they have made during their Work Skills Learning programme.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for students' welfare health and safety is good. Students are well supervised. Procedures for safeguarding students are rigorous. All staff have had appropriate training to fulfil their child protection responsibilities. Staff are very alert to any signs that may indicate a cause for concern about any aspect of students' welfare. Their knowledge of individual students is outstanding. The care and supervision given by teachers, teaching assistants and key workers successfully helps students maintain equilibrium and engage in learning through the school day. Regular PE and encouragement to eat healthily supports students satisfactorily in developing a healthy lifestyle. This is well supported by discussions about substance abuse and sexual health which form part of the PSHE programme. Appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken, and while adequate risk assessments are undertaken for outside visits, on occasions there is a lack of detail in some trip evaluations. The school has a satisfactory plan to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All appropriate recruitment and vetting checks are made on staff and others before they start their employment. The single central register meets all regulatory requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school uses a variety of premises in Barnet, Enfield and Hackney but there are plans in place to move most of the teaching to one new building. There is specialist accommodation available when students attend in their Work Skills Learning but other classrooms are general-purpose rooms. Classrooms are clean, tidy and looked after. Outdoor space is adequate for students to relax at break times. Students undertake more adventurous activities and PE at local sports venues.

Provision of information

The school provides, or makes available, all of the necessary information to parents, carers and others. Questionnaire returns and discussions with parents and carers show that they are very happy with what the school provides and welcome the very good and regular communication, which is personal and relevant. The school is diligent in providing local authorities with the information required for students' annual reviews. Local authorities have positive views about the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Ensure that the weekly timetable is more flexible to allow missed 'key' lessons, especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics, to be rescheduled as soon as possible
- Ensure that assessment for English and mathematics is more detailed and measures students' small steps more precisely, especially the rate at which they make progress.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special		
Date school opened	2007		
Age range of pupils	11–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 9	Girls: 4	Total: 13
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 9	Girls: 4	Total: 13
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£78,000		
Address of school	322A Ballards Lane, London N12 0EY		
Telephone number	020 8446 0300		
Email address	info@southoverpartnership.com		
Headteacher	Carol Frankl Helen Jackson		
Proprietor	The Southover Partnership Limited		

18 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Southover Partnership School, London, N12 0EY

I enjoyed sharing your lessons and seeing at first-hand the work that you do. I would particularly like to thank those who I was able to talk to a little more. I was pleased to see that while you have been at Southover Partnership you have made good progress especially in your learning and improving your attendance. It is clear that your behaviour is improving even though some of you were concerned about this.

The school provides you with a good all-round education and takes good care of you. All the staff know you very well. They know how to help you to develop your personal skills and improve your achievements in the subjects you learn. The school provides an excellent curriculum because there is such a wide range of subjects to study. It is pleasing that you are gaining qualifications which reward you for your hard work and help you to move onto your next steps more successfully. I was impressed with your artwork and photography. I particularly liked the ceramic work you produce. You could improve your work by trying to write more neatly.

I have asked the school's senior leaders to make sure that if you miss a lesson that you do not have to wait until the following week before you can catch up, especially in English and mathematics. This will help you make better progress. I have also asked them to improve the way that your achievements are assessed, especially in English and mathematics.

I hope you achieve success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl
Her Majesty's Inspector