

Northumberland Park Community School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102155
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	376674
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Rundle HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1035
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Reg Rice
Headteacher	Miss Monica Duncan
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 November 2006
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Age group	11–16
Inspection date(s)	18–19 January 2012
Inspection number	367764



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Introduction

Inspection team

Miss J Rundle	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mrs L Farmer	Additional inspector
Dr C Pike	Additional inspector
Mrs S Wallin	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 30 teachers teaching 31 lessons, of which five were joint observations with members of the extended leadership team, and paid short visits to a further 19 lessons. In addition, the inspection team made visits to a year assembly and registration groups and to lessons for intervention groups where specialist help is provided by the differentiation department. Inspectors took account of the responses to the questionnaires in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, safeguarding policies, minutes of the governing body and a sample of teachers' schemes of work. Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors conducted an analysis of 200 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Northumberland Park School is slightly larger than most secondary schools and serves one of the most deprived wards in Greater London. It meets the current floor standard. A large number of students new to the country join throughout the year. Most students are of Turkish, African, Caribbean or White European heritage. Some 70% of students speak English as an additional language, and this proportion is increasing. A small but increasing number of students are at an early stage of learning English and this group includes a growing number of students with asylum or refugee status. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly above average. The proportion of students supported through school action and/or school action plus is below average. The school has links with the secondary department of the Vale Special School, which shares the same site, and with a number of local colleges to provide alternative provision for identified students. The school achieved the gold Cultural Diversity Quality Standard in 2011 and the International School Award in 2010.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. The headteacher and extended leadership team provide a strong lead that is raising staff expectations and the aspirations of students across the school. Staff and students respond positively and there is an ethos of calm ambition. Excellent relationships between staff and students are built on mutual trust. Students, parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its work.
- Attainment has been on an improving trend over the last three years. Although attainment is low overall, the gap between the school’s GCSE results and the national average is closing swiftly. Students make significantly more than the expected progress from their low starting points. They develop their numeracy, reading, speaking and listening skills effectively across the curriculum, although the development of their writing is less well embedded. Significant improvements have occurred in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good across the school, with an increasing amount that is outstanding. However, departments vary in the extent to which teachers’ feedback is sufficiently specific and assessment is used to increase the pace of learning and to sharpen interventions.
- The behaviour of students is good, and at times exemplary, in lessons and around the school. A few responses in questionnaires expressed concerns over behaviour but students are confident that staff deal with incidents effectively. Students display positive attitudes to learning and enjoy being in school. Attendance has improved and the number of exclusions has decreased in the last three years.
- The roles and responsibilities of middle managers have developed, with more accountability now devolved for the quality of teaching and its impact on raising students’ achievement. Governors are supportive and constructively challenging and pay good attention to ensuring the safety of all students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further to bring it to at least the national average by:
 - improving the consistency of teachers’ oral and written feedback so all students know precisely how to improve and not just what to improve
 - using observation and assessment to adapt lessons more quickly to match

- the pace of students' learning
- making more timely interventions to enable the rapid progress of all students
- embedding opportunities for students to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Although in 2010 more students than ever attained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, students' attainment on this measure remains significantly below the national average. Students' performance in humanities is a particular weakness although in languages students attain significantly better than average because of good teaching. Leaders have taken robust actions that are having a positive impact, leading to attainment and progress improving at a faster rate than that nationally. Expectations of students' capabilities have been raised, higher ability students are starting their examination courses a year early and staff are held to account more rigorously for students' achievements.

Students, including those identified with disabilities or special educational needs make good progress. This is because of the high expectations demonstrated by staff and the aspiration fostered in students from the time they enter the school. A 'can do' culture is apparent across the school and students show a determination to succeed, persevering to improve their work in lessons and through homework. Students of African and White European heritage, and those known to be eligible for free school meals, make much better progress than such students nationally because of the school's success in engaging them actively in learning. However, a weakness that the school recognises is a small number of White British students do not make as much progress as they should. During reading sessions seen in tutor times, students said that the reading tasks are helping to increase their comprehension skills and vocabulary which in turn helps them to access information more easily in subjects. Students are articulate and most can present information clearly. The school's focus on the development of literacy across the curriculum is bearing fruit, although opportunities for students to develop their writing in all subjects are not embedded firmly.

Assessment information is used highly effectively to identify students who are underachieving or close to the borderline of two grades. The well-targeted intervention work has enabled the majority to attain the higher grade. Most parents and carers, and all students, recognise the good progress being made. Work seen in lessons and the school's own data show that students are on track to attain or exceed national averages.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good. All staff have secure subject knowledge that is used effectively to plan work that matches the needs of different students and to set high expectations and challenging targets. For example, in one outstanding Year 9 science

lesson, the pace of learning was rapid because the teacher used a broad range of techniques and resources to engage and motivate students and foster their curiosity. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge, careful observation and skilful questioning ensured students were led through a voyage of discovery where they recognised and were able to remember patterns of atoms and electrons within the periodic table. Most staff observe, question and give pertinent feedback on the next steps in learning and to deepen students' understanding. However, at times students are left for too long on independent tasks or teachers miss the opportunity to make timely inputs to accelerate their learning further. Students recognise that the use of strength, improvement, level and target (SILT) is consistent across the school and acknowledge that these targets enable them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do next. However, teachers' feedback on these targets is not always specific enough for students to know precisely how to improve as well as just what to improve.

Students work cooperatively in lessons, listen respectfully to each other's input and debate issues maturely. Relationships between staff and students are excellent so that students are unafraid to ask questions and are prepared to take risks in their learning. Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English receive good support from the differentiation department and teaching assistants in lessons enabling them to make good progress. However some variability exists in the extent to which teachers and assistants plan jointly and in the effectiveness of the deployment of teaching assistants during lessons. Parents, carers and students are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of teaching in the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students behave well in lessons and around the school. Most students, staff, parents and carers report that this good behaviour is typical. The revision of school procedures and the introduction and consistent use of the social and emotional aspects of learning programme reinforce behaviour expectations that students respond to positively. Occasionally, small groups of students drift off task in lessons but this tends to be when work is not challenging enough or if they are expected to be only passive learners. Leaders have implemented a comprehensive range of strategies, including mentoring, a restorative centre and alternative provision to support students with challenging behaviour or who are in danger of becoming disaffected. All these measures are having a positive impact on engagement and behaviour and are raising the number of students in education, employment or training when they leave the school.

Students are polite, courteous and take good care of each other. They say they feel safe in school, and parents and carers agree. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship ensures a good focus on personal safety, drug awareness and refusal skills and consequences. Students say that bullying is rare and are confident that adults deal with any arising issues effectively. Peer support through prefects and peer mediators is good.

Attendance has improved because students want to be at school. Since the last inspection, the number of exclusions has decreased although the exclusion rate for

boys and African and Caribbean students remains disproportionately high.

Leadership and management

There is a clear shared ambition for the school driven by the headteacher and supported extremely well by the extended leadership team and governing body. Good systems are in place and generally used well by all teachers to encourage high standards. Although these systems are not yet consistently applied in all departments, regular monitoring and department reviews are bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching and students' achievement. The strengthened roles, accountability and expectations of middle managers, linked with achievement coordinators, support students' progress and the continuity of their learning across the school.

Senior leaders and governors know the strengths and areas for development of the school because of the rigour of monitoring and evaluation activities and improvement planning. Regular external audits enhance the process further. Good opportunities exist for the development of managers and the professional development of all staff. The school's capacity to improve is good because of the improvements brought about in recent years. While the line management of departments remains largely with the headteacher, plans for more delegation are in place from next year.

The governing body is structured well. Governors are well informed and supportive and they challenge the school constructively through annual reviews. Secure procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of students and staff. Leaders and governors successfully promote equality of opportunity, although the school is aware that students still do not perform equally well in all subjects. The school works closely with parents and carers to overcome any barriers to learning.

The curriculum is good because it is broad and balanced and has an appropriate emphasis on improving students' literacy and numeracy. A good range of academic, vocational and alternative provision is in place to match the needs and aspirations of students. Provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students have a great variety of opportunities to develop and use their social and moral skills, and their knowledge of other cultures is remarkable. Productive links are in place with local colleges to support students as they prepare to leave school.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



20 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Northumberland Park School, London N17 0PG

Thank you for your help and for talking to us during the recent inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work. I am writing to tell you about our findings.

Your school provides you with a good education. It has brought about improvements in your achievement and you now have more opportunities in the curriculum than at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher and other leaders provide a strong lead that is raising the expectations and aspirations of everyone at the school. You respond positively to this and an ethos of calm ambition exists throughout the school. You are very positive about the school and its work. Although you and your parents or carers raised some concerns about behaviour, inspectors found it to be at least good and sometimes excellent. You are confident that any misbehaviour is dealt with effectively by staff. You told us you feel safe and well cared for at school.

You experience good and at times outstanding teaching and consequently make good progress. However, attainment at the school overall is still below the national average. We have asked the school to improve attainment by making sure that:

- the feedback you receive tells you how to improve as well as what to improve
- lessons are adapted more quickly to match the pace of your learning and that teachers intervene when necessary to enable all of you to make rapid progress
- there are enough opportunities for you to develop your writing in all subjects.

All of you can certainly help by responding to teachers' comments and using the feedback that they give to improve your own learning and attainment.

The inspection team wish you well in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector

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