

# Nethergate School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122958
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottingham City
<b>Inspection number</b>	359333
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathy Hooper

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	66
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lesley Odell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracey Ydlibi
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Swansdowne Drive Clifton, Nottingham NG11 8HX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons and eight teachers were observed. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. They reviewed many aspects of the school's work, and looked at the school's policies and planning, records of pupils' progress and pupils' work. They analysed questionnaires from 54 pupils, 15 staff, and 23 from parents. The inspection team looked in detail at a number of key areas.

Is the teaching sufficiently consistent to enable all pupils to meet the targets set for them within lessons?

- Do staff with subject responsibilities analyse assessments of pupils' learning to identify where and how to make improvements?

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than average, catering for pupils with moderate and complex learning difficulties, including: autistic spectrum disorders; behaviour, emotional and social difficulties; and speech, language and communication disabilities. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are twice as many boys as girls, as is the case nationally in special schools. Approximately half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. A small minority of pupils are from ethnic minority families. The school was under the threat of closure, but a decision was made last year to keep it open and increase numbers to 75. A new headteacher has been in post for four terms, and a new senior team have been in place since September 2010. The school has achieved several awards: from the Association of Care Caterers, for its work with a local care home on healthy lifestyles' Healthy Schools Gold award 2007 & 2010; Activemark and Sportsmark 2008; and the International Schools Award.

**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

Nethergate provides an excellent standard of education for all its pupils. Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development and good progress in their academic work. A parent of a Year 11 pupil commented: 'My son has loved being at Nethergate. The teaching staff are 'brill'. My son will miss the school when he leaves. I think they are all stars.' The school is exceptionally harmonious and pupils thoroughly enjoy being in school, saying: 'It is amazing' and 'I would not change it for the world.' The school operates as a very inclusive and enabling community where every pupil is helped to flourish within a safe but stimulating environment.

Pupils thrive because teaching and learning are good. Pupils say their lessons are 'fun'. The best lessons are characterised by the total engagement of all pupils and high levels of enjoyment. Teachers use their records of assessments of pupils' ability and progress very effectively to plan appropriate learning outcomes for each individual. They teach pupils how to learn, as well as subject specific knowledge and skills. In occasional lessons, teachers do not plan enough different activities to meet the wide range of needs and talk too much. The distribution of equipment and technical problems limit the use of information and communication technology in lessons. The curriculum is outstanding because it is rich and varied, and designed to ensure pupils make the best progress in basic skills of literacy, numeracy and science. Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' self-esteem and sense of belonging, such as the weekly sessions of 'Big Sing'. The curriculum provides pupils with a wide experience of the outside world through the local community and beyond. A boy who was afraid of horses now rides without stirrups. Trips to France allow pupils to experience a different culture. Pupils' care, guidance and support are outstanding because each pupil's needs and abilities are so well identified, understood and addressed.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher has managed a significant change in staffing and welded together a new senior leadership team while ensuring that standards continue to rise. Excellent monitoring systems are in place. The school's analysis of pupils' progress is exceptional and provides all teachers with a clear framework within which to plan lessons. Emphasis on the professional development of staff has encouraged them to willingly improve their practice and middle managers have a good impact on learning. The governing body is outstanding and a formidable force in driving through changes. Much has been achieved in promoting a partnership with parents; it is good and high on the school's agenda for further improvement. The best possible practice in reviewing and monitoring practice makes safeguarding procedures outstanding. The school has developed good partnerships beyond school, particularly in the local community, as evidenced in the excellent work with the local care home. Outcomes for pupils are excellent and the school provides outstanding value for money.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement a wider range of teaching strategies, including the use of information and communication technology, to ensure that all pupils are fully engaged in all lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

All groups of pupils make equally good progress in their learning. This is because teachers use data from the school's analyses to identify challenging and well-judged targets for pupils. Although some under-achieving pupils received extra help last year outside lessons to address gaps in their understanding, this year teaching assistants provide exceptional support to individuals in class. In a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson, three groups of pupils, each with an adult, worked at different levels of understanding money. Pupils made the best possible progress because of the adults' skilful questioning, excellent choice of resources, and great good humour. Their understanding was thoroughly checked and extended, and pupils clearly relished their growing understanding. Those pupils who have been transferred from mainstream schools because they are in danger of exclusion often make rapid progress. Several parents of pupils who had recently been admitted praised the school's positive impact, one stating: 'The school has been very successful in helping him to mature and reach his goals.' Pupils make the best progress in English and progress in mathematics is good. Pupils' progress in science is rapidly improving due to changes in the way in which it is taught. The school's tracking data shows that pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3, are reaching higher levels this year than in previous years. Almost all of them achieved one or more unit awards from an examination board. Key Stage 4 pupils' achievement is good and improving because of the increasing range of qualifications available. Last year, all of them achieved more than fifteen unit awards, with a third of them exceeding predictions, and one pupil gained a pass at GCSE level.

The vast majority of pupils enjoy their lessons. They are confident and sociable, and their behaviour is exemplary. They learn to control their behaviour, and settle disagreements, with the skilful support of the school's behaviour manager. They state emphatically that they feel very safe in school, and there is no bullying, and their parents agree. Their attendance has improved dramatically over the last year, and is now good. They know how to live healthily, make considerable contributions to the local community, such as their work in the local care home, and are very supportive of each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They reflect maturely on issues and develop informed opinions, for instance through the poetry of Benjamin Zephaniah.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good. In lessons where pupils make outstanding progress, they are all actively involved throughout the entire lesson. Teachers hold pupils' attention through well-focused questioning that reinforces and extends each pupil's understanding. No time is lost in involving them in challenging but enjoyable activities so that pupils learn in different ways. Key Stage 2 pupils learned to enjoy reading when wearing 'magic' cloaks. Teachers model their enjoyment of learning with pupils, developing a collaborative approach to activities. They plan to match learning to individual needs, identifying outcomes for each pupil. Expectations are high and relationships are excellent. Pupils are able to take risks without fear of failure and to improve their work as their understanding develops. On rare occasions, learning is not so successful because teachers talk for too long, sufficiently varied activities are not given to different abilities and the most-able pupils take a disproportionate amount of the teacher's attention. Opportunities are missed in many lessons to make use of information and communication technology to extend and support learning due to the distribution of equipment across the school and the unreliability of the server.

Pupils enjoy a lively and relevant curriculum that is tailored exceptionally well to individual needs. A wide range of activities develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem, as well as

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their life skills. They speak proudly of pottery they have made and musical instruments they have played, as well as events such as the Christmas Party and mini-marathon. An increasingly wide range of extra-curricular activities and links with other schools develop pupils' personal and social skills very effectively. Notable are a five-year partnership with a local football team which is hugely valued by pupils, girls and boys alike, peer mentoring with local schools and regular interactions with elderly people living in a care home.

Excellent oversight of each pupil's progress and circumstances is at the heart of the school's provision. Pupils from other schools, previously in danger of exclusion, are very rapidly absorbed into the school. They begin to enjoy lessons and make a full contribution. Excellent links with local colleges ensure that older pupils gain access to relevant courses. The school is rightly proud of its success with vulnerable pupils, working closely with other agencies. Imaginative strategies to engage families have led to improved attendance for persistent non-attenders.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

With the excellent support of a well-informed governing body, the headteacher has ably transformed the culture of the school. Significant staff changes and a skilled

- senior leadership team have heightened everyone's understanding of their role in promoting pupils' achievement. Less-experienced staff readily ask for help and there is a real desire for self-improvement. Performance management is used to address pupils' under-achievement and is supplemented by the school's excellent monitoring systems. The governing body has well-developed systems for holding the school to account. It has worked strategically to point a clear direction for the school and has an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. Its influence can be traced through the staffing structure, the curriculum, behaviour, development planning and amendments to its own ways of working. The establishment of a strong team of middle managers is beginning to have a good impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

The school has invested a great deal of energy and imagination into promoting a partnership with parents and has made significant progress. It has not always been easy and remains a priority for development. The school points to some significant benefits of an increasing range of the partnerships. Peer mentoring, in partnership with local mainstream schools, is valued by all pupils. Contact with minority ethnic groups is developing well. The school has an action plan for promoting community cohesion. There are excellent arrangements for safeguarding that enable pupils to confidently access all

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activities. As a result, provision has improved despite significant upheaval and the threat of closure.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Although only a minority of the parents returned a questionnaire, of those one third wrote very positive comments about the impact of the school on their children.

The inspection team found the school to be outstandingly successful in enabling pupils to reach challenging targets and develop a wide range of personal and social skills. It is making great efforts to engage all parents.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nethergate 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 66 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	57	9	39	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	61	9	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	65	6	26	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	65	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	57	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	61	9	39	0	0	0	0
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)	13	57	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	65	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	65	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	57	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	65	6	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	61	8	35	0	0	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Nethergate School, Nottingham, NG11 8HX**

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school this week. We really enjoyed our time with you, taking part in your lessons and other activities, talking to you and looking at your work.

We found your school to be one of the best. It is outstanding because you really enjoy learning and taking part in all the many activities the school provides for you. As a result, you learn a lot. With the help of your teachers, you are developing into very nice young people. You help each other, to keep safe and healthy, and to learn. We were very impressed by your confidence, for instance when you led the school in the Big Sing, by your hard work in lessons, and the way many of you can explain how much progress you have made in learning. It was great to see the pride you have in your successes.

In order to make your lessons even better, we have asked your teachers to increase the number of different and exciting ways they use to help you learn. You might help them by telling them when you do not quite understand and, if you can, why things are not clear.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Hooper

Lead inspector

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