

# Notton House School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109394
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bristol City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	356531
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Mascall

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>	9–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	40
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Matthew Leighton-Fry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bobby Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	28 Notton Lacock Chippenham SN15 2NF
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## Introduction

This was a joint inspection by one additional inspector, and one regulatory inspector who was inspecting the school's boarding provision. The additional inspector visited nine lessons and observed eight teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff and students. Students' work, information on their progress, safeguarding policies and other documents were evaluated. Questionnaires from three parents and carers, 35 staff and 14 boarders were scrutinised.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- the impact that very low attendance and low amount of teaching time has on students' progress
- how effective the school's actions are in improving students' attendance and behaviour
- how well teachers are using assessment information to ensure students know what they have to do to improve
- how well senior leaders are monitoring students' progress in order to ensure equality of opportunity
- the effectiveness of the governing body in challenging the school to improve.

## Information about the school

Notton House is a residential school for boys who have statements of special educational needs for behaviour, social and emotional difficulties. An increasing number of students have additional learning difficulties, including attention deficit disorder, autistic spectrum disorders and communication and learning difficulties. A small number of students are in the care of the local authority. Most students are from White British backgrounds.

Students come from several different local authorities, including Bristol, Swindon, Wiltshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire. At the time of the inspection, there were 26 students boarding and 12 who were being educated off-site by a range of different outside providers. Whilst these sites were not visited, the inspector held discussions with staff who monitor the provisions. Two students were in education elsewhere. There are two primary classes that have students mainly from Years 6 and 7 with a small number from Year 8. The secondary classes include two mixed Year 8 and 9 groups and three Years 10 and 11 groups. The headteacher took up his post in September 2010.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Although the school's leaders have a clear understanding of what is required, the changes being made have not brought about sufficient improvement.

The school's assessment of its effectiveness is too generous. The governing body has not been sufficiently challenging in addressing weaknesses. Only one of the two issues raised at the time of the last inspection has been addressed. The amount of teaching time remains inadequate as not all pupils have access to full-time education. As a result of its current failings, and the lack of challenge provided by governors, the school's capacity to improve is inadequate.

The headteacher has put in place an action plan that accurately identifies areas for development. Last term, improvements were made to the systems in place to manage students' behaviour, including new tracking systems and a revised points system. While there is now a downward trend in the number of incidents of poor behaviour, and students are no longer absconding from the school site, their behaviour remains inadequate. Attendance is well below average. Although a very small minority of students do attend regularly, there are too many who do not, and this prevents them from making the progress they should.

Students do not make enough progress in their learning, particularly in Years 8 to 10, and overall their achievement is inadequate. In Years 6 and 7, students' achievement is broadly satisfactory, except in English, mainly because they attend more regularly and the teaching is stronger. The overall quality of teaching is inadequate; however, and the teaching of English is especially weak.

Students' progress is further undermined by an inadequate curriculum. There is insufficient taught time and at Key Stage 3, students do not have the opportunity to study history and geography. There is also an imbalance in provision for the two mixed Year 8 and 9 classes, which receive different amounts of teaching in mathematics, English and science.

Students' achievements in English are inadequate in Years 8 to 11 because the teaching of English is not effective and planning does not ensure students have sufficient opportunities to develop the necessary range of skills. Provision for those students who have low spelling and reading ages is inadequately coordinated and monitored. Whilst there is evidence of students' numeracy skills being developed well in a number of other

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subjects, opportunities for using their literacy skills are limited. There is however, no overall coordination to ensure literacy and numeracy are promoted effectively across the curriculum for all learners. Students in off-site provision are not receiving a full-time education and the school does not have a sufficiently clear view of the progress they are making.

The school's boarding provision is judged satisfactory overall. The students live in an environment where their emotional and health needs are met well. ♦ However there are a number of National Minimum Standards that are not fully met and these need to be addressed immediately. Students of all ages talk positively about school and how well they feel they are doing. They are very enthusiastic about all the different sports they can participate in and talk knowledgeably about what they should and should not eat.

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

- Improve students' achievements and progress by:
  - - taking effective action to improve attendance
  - - ensuring that the amount of time for teaching meets recommendations - ensuring that students in Key Stage 3 study all subjects within the National Curriculum
  - - ensuring all students have equal access to the range of experiences within the curriculum
  - - improving the planning and monitoring of the curriculum, including in off-site provision, to ensure provision is of a high quality
  - ? establishing systems to develop and monitor the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- Improve standards in English by:
  - - ensuring that teachers' lesson planning provides students with a range of experiences that improve their skills
  - - ensuring teaching is consistently of a good quality
  - ? ensuring that the progress of those students with low literacy skills is monitored effectively to make sure they are making the progress they should.
- Improve behaviour by fully embedding the new systems for managing and improving students' behaviour.
- Improve the impact of the governing body by ensuring it fulfils its role in challenging the school to address weaknesses and support its improvement.
- Meet all National Minimum Standards for boarding.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****4**

When they start at the school many students have had a very disrupted education and some have been out of school for long periods of time. For the very small number of students who attend regularly, particularly in Years 6 and 7, and participate in what the school has to offer, achievement is broadly satisfactory except in English. Of those

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students who left last year, all gained at least one form of accreditation and a small number achieved passes in GCSE examinations. ♦♦ In English, students' achievement is inadequate. Progress for those students who are educated off-site is unsatisfactory. They do not have access to full-time education and, although studying a range of courses, their progress is adversely affected by their very low attendance. Students' achievements overall are inadequate.

There are some subjects, such as science, mathematics and art, where students clearly enjoy learning. In a Year 10 science lesson, students showed good recall of previous work and, by the end of the lesson, were confident enough to explain the difference between compounds and elements. They carried out experiments sensibly and showed awe and wonder when successfully separating a mixture using a magnet. In a joint Year 6 and Year 7 lesson, students enthusiastically participated in a mathematical game at the end of a lesson, showing off their skills in multiplication.

Students show great enthusiasm for all the different activities they can do, particularly in sport. They have a very good understanding of what constitutes healthy food, and spent some time in discussion with the inspector about the fact that the chips at school were sometimes too greasy, and whether this was a bad thing. While students' behaviour is inadequate, there is evidence that it is starting to improve. The new points system, introduced to improve behaviour, has eradicated any instances of students leaving the site. School data, however, show there are still many incidents of poor behaviour in school, and the number of physical restraints is still high. Despite this, students are beginning to accept and value the points system and believe it is proving successful in making the school a safe place to be in.

The school council is rightly proud of the changes it has made. Its members feel they are now being listened to by the headteacher and have been pleased, for example, by the fact they have had benches put around the school. Students do much to help others, such as raising funds for the shoe box charity. Opportunities to develop workplace skills through work experience are good, and in these situations students generally behave well, attend regularly and are punctual. However, their poor attendance in school and the limited opportunities to develop their literacy and other basic skills do not prepare them well for their future working lives.

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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>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</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

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is inadequate. Although there are some positive features, there are too many inconsistencies. These particularly affect students in Years 8 to 10, when teaching often lacks challenge, gives too few opportunities for students to work independently, and has low expectations. In some subjects, however, including mathematics, science, art and food technology, the teaching seen during the inspection was good. The youngest students benefit from good teaching in the primary classes. These students know and understand the expectations of staff and, when they are high, they respond well. Year 10 students moved from an English lesson where they had been difficult and uncooperative to a mathematics lesson where they settled quickly and worked hard. The high expectations of behaviour, the good pace of learning and clear instructions in the lesson ensured that students made good progress in understanding how to draw pie charts and calculate sector frequency. In the most effective lessons, teachers are constantly challenging students, using good questioning that checks their understanding. Where teaching is not effective, there are low expectations of behaviour, students are allowed to take control and there is limited opportunity to discuss what students will learn. This was very evident in a design and technology lesson, when students were aggressive and abusive, destroyed their work and refused to follow any instructions. Whilst work in lessons is generally well matched to students' ability, this is not consistent in all classes. There are good examples in students' books of effective marking that helps the students

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to understand what they have to do to improve, but again this is not consistent in all subjects.

The curriculum lacks breadth at Key Stage 3 and has not been planned effectively to ensure all students have similar experiences. Taught time is short because time is lost at the start and end of the week, as a result of students starting school late in the morning and boys being sent home at lunchtime on Fridays. There have been some good initiatives to improve the curriculum, including access to a local farm and opportunities to attend horticultural courses. Work experience is valued by the students. The new off-site provision has resolved some issues regarding older students who did not want to be boarders. It is enabling them to have a more relevant range of experiences but it is not providing them with a full-time education.

In some subjects, such as food technology, numeracy skills are promoted well but there is limited evidence of literacy being promoted in other curriculum subjects. The residential facility contributes well to the curriculum, particularly in providing students with opportunities to gain accreditation.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The care provided by staff and their commitment to the students is good. However, individual education plans are not always being reviewed and updated regularly and in a few cases some have had the same targets for over a year. The school is in the process of auditing students' statements of special educational needs to ensure all have the support they are required to have. Links with parents and carers are good and these are used well to support students and their families, including providing training for parents and carers. Partnerships are satisfactory and good steps are being taken to extend links with a range of partners to support students' learning and their well-being.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. He has worked hard to establish high expectations regarding students' behaviour and ensuring they make more progress. The newly introduced procedures to monitor students' behaviour are providing the school with a better understanding of progress in this area. Together with the governing body, the headteacher has initiated a review of the senior management structure because of the imbalance of responsibilities for some staff. Governors are supportive of the school and keen to develop it further. However, they do not have a clear understanding of the school's performance. At this stage, they are providing insufficient challenge to the school's leadership in addressing all



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the weaknesses that have been identified. Although the pace of change was very quick initially, staff and students have gradually accepted the changes. However, these recent changes have not yet brought about sufficient improvement and demonstrate that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring students' progress and is particularly good at checking the progress of those students who are in the care of the local authority. However, the same attention has not been paid to ensuring equality of opportunity within the curriculum. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were satisfactory. Child protection procedures are in place, with staff receiving the necessary training. The school has relevant links with outside agencies to support students if any concerns are raised about their well-being or welfare. Also, action has been taken to ensure that new staff are suitably checked before being appointed to the school. ♦ Links with the local community are sound and the school has appropriate plans to develop community cohesion further through closer links globally and nationally.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<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>4</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A very small number of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Although their responses were generally positive, none chose to make any additional comments about the school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Notton House 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 inspector received 3 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	33	1	33	1	33	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	33	1	33	1	33	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)	1	33	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	33	1	33	1	33	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	33	2	67	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	33	2	67	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	33	2	67	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	2	67	1	33	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.**



21 January 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Notton House School, Chippenham SN15 2NF**

Thank you for being so helpful when we came to visit your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and a special thank you to those of you who came to talk to us.

Those of you who attend school regularly make satisfactory progress in some subjects. The youngest students make the best progress because they attend well and teaching is helping them to learn. The oldest students are not making enough progress, have lessons which are not challenging enough and are not given opportunities to work things out for themselves. There are some good aspects of the school, including how much you all know about keeping healthy. You are well looked after and the care inspector has written positively in the report about many of the good things that go on in the boarding provision.

Unfortunately, there are some serious weaknesses at Notton House. We have asked the school's leaders to make some important improvements and we think they need some extra help to put them right as quickly as possible. We call this 'special measures'. ♦

Inspectors will visit the school regularly to make sure it is improving. Below are the things that the school has to improve:

- your attendance ♦ we want leaders to make sure you attend more regularly
- the curriculum ♦ to make sure you are taught all the required subjects and have the same opportunities as each other. You also need to have more lesson time. You need more opportunities to extend your skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects.
- standards in English ? to improve teaching and to ensure that those of you who are not good readers have better help
- your behaviour ? to make sure the new rewards system and tracking procedures help you to improve your behaviour
- the governing body ? so that governors more effective in challenging the school
- the boarding part of the school ♦ so that it meets all the minimum standards set by the government.

We wish you well for the future and hope you will all help your teachers by behaving well and coming to school more often

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascall Lead inspector

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