

Stoke Newington School and Sixth Form

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100279
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	354829
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Clare Gillies

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1359
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Henry Stewart
Headteacher	Annie Gammon
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Over 40 lessons were observed including several joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. About 50 teachers were seen in lessons and tutor sessions. Meetings were held with members of the school staff, several groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair, a parent governor representing the Turkish community, the school improvement partner and the school's police officer. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at many documents, including details about its specialism activities, policies, tracking and monitoring data, the school development plan, its partnerships and community links. Questionnaires completed by 246 parents and carers, almost the same number of students and over two-thirds of staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The degree to which effective actions, particularly during the present academic year, have raised attainment and secured improved progress, especially for significantly underperforming groups.
- Whether middle leaders and teachers assess standards and predict grades accurately and, in response, how well they take the required action and adjust their teaching to match students' needs.
- Whether, since the first A-Level results in 2008, the actions taken have been strong enough for overall effectiveness of the sixth form to be good.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. It has specialist status for media, arts, science, mathematics and inclusion. It is a School of Creativity and has been awarded Gold Artsmark status. The school has a relatively stable, multicultural population with White British students representing 27% of the student population, Turkish/Kurdish/Cypriot students representing 20%, Asian students representing about 15% and Black Caribbean students about 10%. About one third of students do not speak English as their first language and close to 50 students are refugees and asylum seekers. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average and the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is almost double the national average. An above average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Between 2008 and 2010 the school was extensively refurbished. During that time, lessons could not always be taught in specialist rooms and the computer system was unreliable.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Stoke Newington's overall effectiveness is good. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire said that their child enjoys school. Students value the excellent range of extra-curricular activities, the school's specialisms, its creativity and the well-resourced new building. Even more, they appreciate the school's strong promotion of equal opportunities and respect for individuals, and its successful anti-bullying work. Students feel extremely safe in school, know support is there should they need it and are fully aware of potentially unsafe situations in the modern, technological world. The excellent relationships which most students have with teachers underpin their enjoyment of learning.

During the inspection learning was outstanding in close to one third of the lessons seen and good in most others. Teachers prepare imaginative presentations for the interactive whiteboards and ask stimulating questions to nurture thinking and understanding. Lessons move fast and students discuss their work together well. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge and convey their enthusiasm for their subjects with flair, making lessons fun, interesting and relevant to students' lives.

When lessons are less successful, teachers focus on what they are going to do rather than what, and how they want students to learn. They do not consider students' different levels of attainment to plan work that matches their needs. The school's lesson planning forms are not well structured. The quality of homework and marking is variable. Many teachers are skilful at keeping less motivated students on track, but when this is not the case some students become inattentive and distract others. Behaviour around the school is sometimes noisy and boisterous but always controlled. Lower attaining groups, with a high proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not always have enough learning support assistants on hand to support individuals who need help to learn or behave sensibly.

Despite outstanding progress in several subjects in the last couple of years, GCSE results in other subjects, particularly mathematics and double science, have not improved at the same rate as seen nationally and a minority of students did not make satisfactory progress in 2010. In September 2008, the headteacher realised that underperformance was not being identified and tackled effectively. As a part of effective self-evaluation, middle leaders and most teachers now assess standards accurately and with senior leaders they track and analyse data regularly, identify underperforming groups and individuals and put support in place. Students make good progress in all years and the variation between subjects and groups has narrowed. Confirmed by assessed coursework, modules already taken and work seen, Year 11 results are set to rise in 2011.

Imaginative and creative learning is linked to all the specialisms and permeates other subjects too. The first BBC style Question Time the school organised was cited as a model

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of good practice and a science and mathematics Spy Day has been successfully repeated for several years.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because the school makes respect for diversity and emotional literacy such a high priority. Students articulate why it is important to study different religions, why they value learning about citizenship and why they find discussions about sensitive issues or differing views helpful.

With significant improvements emerging from the correct analysis of what needed to be done, a strong leadership team, a confident governing body and increasing popularity of the sixth form, the school has good capacity for sustained improvement. At the same time the school will continue to foster 'its strong cultural ethos and help to develop caring and sociable young people'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of lessons where learning is good by the end of the calendar year by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to plan work which matches students' individual needs
 - in consultation with all staff, reviewing lesson planning forms to generate one, simple and effective template which focuses on how and what students are to learn
 - involving staff, students and parents in a review of homework and marking to establish consistency and value in both.
- Raise attainment further by the end of July 2012 by:
 - arranging the timetable so that learning support assistants' participation in targeted lessons benefits the maximum number of students who need help with their learning and/or behaviour
 - sharing good practice between teachers in how to manage behaviour by the minority of students who interrupt learning in a few lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Outstanding progress is seen in art, textiles, drama, history, Spanish, BTEC performing arts, religious education and the separate sciences taken by 50 students in 2010. In 2010, the significant improvements in data analysis generated better results in English and by students known to be eligible for free school meals and those of Turkish heritage. This year, senior leaders have also focused on raising Black Caribbean heritage students' achievement. The past decline in students' progress in Years 7 to 9 has been addressed and students now achieve well by the end of Year 9. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least as good progress as other students.

Students work extremely hard in many lessons and, in some, show a maturity beyond their years. When asked to discuss work in pairs or groups, they get going quickly, stay focused and it is clear that they are determined to do well and enjoy learning. For example, Year 7 students persevered with enthusiasm when they matched graphs with

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statistics in a mathematics lesson. A few students lack self- motivation and can become chatty and restless if the teacher does not control behaviour well.

The fact that students enjoy school is reflected in above average attendance and a significant reduction in persistent absenteeism in the last two years. Punctuality to lessons is good but the school continues to tackle lateness, especially in Year 11. The number of permanent exclusions has fallen and fixed-term ones and repeats are also down. Nevertheless, the school is aware that it does not always use its internal exclusion area effectively and it has taken steps to promote more frequently restorative justice and reflection time.

Surprisingly, only half the students who responded to the questionnaires felt that the school helps them to be healthy. In reality, many of them have the healthy school lunches, join in extra-curricular sports activities and learn about healthy lifestyles in life skills as well as science lessons and assemblies.

The two-layered school council, one layer being elected by students, is effective and they are confident that their voice is heard. The council has helped to raise the profile of recycling and eco-issues. So far, it has not had a strong role in the local community. Students willingly take on positions of responsibility and contribute to charity fund raising enthusiastically.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers use computers well to enhance learning, for example using sophisticated software to compose rhythms for film sequences in Year 7. They prepare very good resources, for example to debate which sample history questions are best in Year 11. Students value the extremely helpful materials and support they are given for revision. When learning does not proceed smoothly it is often because teachers have not prepared resources to match students' abilities.

A strong feature of the curriculum is the life skills programme, rated highly by students, which prepares them very well for both the world of work and their personal lives. With successful work experience and specialist careers teaching, students are well informed about their post-16 options. In 2010, only two Year 11 students did not proceed into education, training or employment. The construction diploma has been very successful with strong results in 2010. Senior leaders acknowledge that the drive to improve students' literacy has yet to gather momentum in all subjects; plans are in place for the next academic year.

Even before they arrive in Year 7, students are cared for well. The school's primary to secondary transition arrangements have been filmed as a model of good practice. Looked-after children, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or others who have particular issues to deal with outside school receive careful consideration and support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body have made their determination to raise students' achievement very transparent. The vast majority of staff feel proud to be at the school and that their contribution is valued, with one writing, 'This is a great place to work'. A small minority of teachers have felt pressured by the focus to improve every student's progress, rather than actual results, but this is what has raised attainment. Members of the governing body agree with inspectors that senior leaders now monitor lessons well by focusing on learning and progress and taking action if teachers do not deliver good lessons.

To stay within budget, restructuring has been carried out sensitively. The senior leadership team is strong and some effective new middle leaders have been appointed. The governing body reflects the student make-up and includes professionals with relevant experience. Several members have been trained to understand and question achievement data. Each term the vice chair of the governing body and headteacher check safeguarding

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registers and policies and governors receive a termly report. All staff are trained in child protection. Safeguarding procedures are good.

The school's creativity and enthusiasm to promote strong community cohesion is epitomised by the Brazilian flavoured annual carnival it has run for four years with five local primary schools. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination effectively. Students from different backgrounds work with many organisations, for example leading an event at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office marking International Day against Homophobia. There are many modern foreign languages and other overseas trips but not as many to broaden students' knowledge about other parts of the United Kingdom.

Parents and carers can communicate with the school in many different ways and the school's website is informative and helpful. The school's active liaison work and courses have particularly benefited relationships with Turkish parents and students and similar links with Black Caribbean parents are being developed.

In addition to numerous partnerships which ensure that students' social and health needs are dealt with professionally, the school's wide range of contacts enriches students' learning. School musicians have performed at fund raising events to transform an old, local church building into a community arts centre. Teachers and older students help primary schools, for example with their mathematics and art. There are numerous ties with arts and media organisations such as the Barbican and the London College of Fashion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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Sixth form

Since opening in 2006, standards have gone up every year with more subjects showing good added value. Along with higher retention rates, attendance, which was below average in the previous inspection, is now average. Recruitment for September 2012 is higher than in previous years with over 240 applications. Students have a wide choice of courses through the North Hackney sixth form partnership. Facilities for courses such as music technology and science are very good.

In 2010, one-third of A levels were graded A or B and the majority of AS results improved. Practically all Year 12 students continued into Year 13. Students are taught well and variation between subjects has reduced. As in the main school, well-organised and accurate monitoring identifies students who need extra help with academic or personal issues. Students really appreciate the one-to-one help they receive when necessary. Progress is good overall with independent learning and thinking balanced with teaching and guidance. Students are increasingly contributing to life in the main school, to voluntary work in the local community and acting as role models.

Guidance about universities and careers is thorough; students much enjoy holding speed dating sessions with professionals from a wide range of jobs. The number of Year 13 students receiving higher education offers has increased each year. Leadership successfully motivates students and teachers to aim high and management is tight while treating students as young adults.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

About one fifth of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire which is below average for secondary schools. Those who contributed written comments praised the school's ethos, much of the teaching and many said how pleased they were with everything the school offered. They criticised the variability in the quality of homework and marking and mentioned certain subjects where there were teachers who they feel cannot control behaviour and/or teach effectively. The school is aware of the homework and marking situation and agrees that it needs to be improved. The headteacher knows that there are a very few teachers who do not teach as effectively as the majority and action is being taken to improve their performance.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 246 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,352 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	33	150	61	11	4	4	2
The school keeps my child safe	91	37	134	54	16	7	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	101	41	127	52	12	5	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	66	27	141	57	26	11	8	3
The teaching is good at this school	60	24	151	61	19	8	5	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	20	144	59	40	16	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	19	146	59	42	17	3	1
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)	57	23	144	59	22	9	7	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	22	158	64	18	7	9	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	27	125	51	32	13	8	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	17	148	60	37	15	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	58	24	145	59	18	7	6	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	34	137	56	11	4	9	4

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



16 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Stoke Newington School and Sixth Form Centre, Hackney N16
9EX**

Thank you all for being so welcoming. We much enjoyed the two days we spent at your school and meeting some of you during the inspection. We have judged your school as good and the report celebrates the creativity, the specialisms, the harmonious atmosphere and the school's imaginative work to promote tolerance and understanding. It was encouraging to hear so many of you say that you feel very safe at school and enjoy being there; over 90% of your parents said the same in the questionnaires.

Several of you described the very good relationships you have with many teachers and how you appreciate what they do for you. We certainly think that you are taught well. We were impressed with how the majority of you concentrate and work so sensibly together in lessons. Your behaviour is good overall but, occasionally, a few of you do not stay focused in lessons and you distract others. We have suggested that teachers who are particularly skilful at keeping you all focused and behaving well share their expertise with others.

GCSE and A-level results have improved in the last few years but not as fast as they have nationally, so, as you may have noticed, the headteacher and senior leaders have introduced more accurate assessments and monitoring of how you are doing. We are confident this will generate better results this summer. To make sure things go on improving we have asked the school to ensure that teachers use data to plan work that matches your needs and to plan lessons by focusing on how and what they want you to learn. We hope you will continue to work hard in the future too. The school also needs to review the quality of homework and marking, which is variable at the moment, and how it allocates learning support assistants to lessons so they help those of you who need support the most.

For those of you taking examinations this term we hope they go really well and, for all of you, have a good summer and successful, enjoyable futures.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies

Lead inspector

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