

Northgate School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 133749 |
| Local Authority | Barnet |
| Inspection number | 360583 |
| Inspection dates | 28–29 June 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | James Bowden |

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

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| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 11 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 4 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Marincowitz |
| Headteacher | Athy Demetriades |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 September 2007 |
| School address | Edgware Community Hospital Edgware HA8 0AD |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector observed teaching and learning in six lessons, taught by five teachers and two teaching assistants. Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and others with posts of responsibility. The Chair and Chair-designate of the Managing Committee and a member of the New Beginnings Young Person's Crisis Recovery Unit (NBYPUR) also met with the inspector. The inspector also met formally with a small group of students. He observed the school's work, and looked at samples of students' work, the school's planning and other assessment records. The inspector analysed five questionnaires from parents and carers, 11 from students and eight from staff. He reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Does the school have a consistent track record of improving pupils' achievement throughout their stay?
- Is teaching sufficiently challenging for students, enabling all groups to make the best progress possible?
- How effective is the school's self-evaluation in supporting continual improvement?

Information about the school

Northgate School is situated in the grounds of Edgware Community Hospital in north-west London. Its provision has changed since the previous inspection. It now only provides for students from the NBYPUR, a residential clinic for young people with serious mental health problems where they stay from three weeks up to, and in some cases more than, five months. In addition, the school currently takes a three day students referred by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Almost all students are dual registered at Northgate and with their home school. Turnover throughout the year is high, with 121 students having attended the school during the last academic year. Currently, girls outnumber boys by almost three to one and the great majority of students are of White background. The school does not provide lunches for students.

The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, Sportsmark award and Investors in Children 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

Northgate is an outstandingly successful school which meets fully its aim of developing within each individual the desire to achieve. It is a school where every child really does matter and it makes a tremendous contribution to students' personal development and academic progress. This is the result of the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and her dedicated and enthusiastic team of staff, all of whom subscribe fully to the school's ethos. In a letter to the inspector, an ex-student wrote, 'School gives you a future but Northgate gave me mine back. Being there for a year I saw many young people walk through the doors. Equally, I saw them walk out, but there is a difference. They walked out with their heads held high.' The quality of care, guidance and support for students is of the highest quality. Indicative of the excellent partnerships to support learning and well-being is the way the school timetable and the clinical programmes dovetail, thus giving each student a full and varied programme of education and therapy, and ensuring a synergy of support. The school is also highly effective in supporting parents and carers, providing weekly progress reports and supporting transition arrangements when their children leave. Without exception, parents and carers are happy with all aspects of the school's work. One summed up the typical view noting, 'Overall, the school has been very supportive and provided what was needed for our child. There is great emphasis on making sure every child feels valued and has achieved something useful. The staff are amazing.'

Because of their serious mental health problems, nearly all students on arrival have lost interest in and enthusiasm for education. However, at the school, this is rekindled and the great majority make excellent progress, in relation to their starting points, by the time they leave. This is particularly the case in literacy, numeracy and their knowledge and understanding of the use of information and communication technology (ICT), as well as in the broad range of accreditations obtained in both academic and vocational courses. Although the vast majority are too unwell to sit the full range of GCSE subjects, including English and mathematics, in the broad range of subjects taken in 2010, 70% achieved A* to C grade passes. This has continued the school's upward trend since 2008.

Students enjoy their learning and the school's ethos. Consequently, all make exceptional progress in their all-round personal development. One student said to the inspector, 'There is no culture of messing around, we all want to come to school, and it is enjoyable.' This is reflected in the school's attendance records which show that this has remained at 97% every week since March 2008. Indicative of students' excellent knowledge and understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles are the school's Healthy Schools status and Sportsmark award. Students' creative development is outstanding as a result of the school's focus on enabling them to write poetry and produce works of art. Students clearly channel their emotions and experiences into this work, as shown by their outstanding contributions to last week's 'Art from the Heart' two-day art exhibition.

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Teaching is outstanding because it is lively, yet purposeful, and makes a significant impact on students' academic learning and wider personal development. The use of assessment to support learning is also a significant strength; in particular, it enables teachers to identify what students need to catch up with in order to take full advantage of the curriculum provided. However, the school recognises that assessment of students' competencies in ICT across the curriculum is not fully honed. The school's bespoke curriculum, underpinned by close communication with mainstream schools, enables students to work to their strengths, and achieve accreditation. It also provides opportunities for individual work in a vast range of lively and interesting activities.

The passionate and strategic vision of the headteacher underpins the work of the school. It has continued to improve since the previous inspection, moving onwards and upwards. Accurate and highly effective self-evaluation has resulted in excellent-quality strategic planning with a continuing focus on improving students' outcomes by making learning a memorable, positive and enjoyable experience for all. In addition, students are now involved in their own learning and evaluation of their progress, which ensures they now understand fully what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. The management committee and the school work closely together to ensure safeguarding procedures and practices have the highest priority, which has resulted in outstanding practice. Curriculum content and enrichment activities support the school's excellent promotion of community cohesion within the school itself, the local community and beyond at an international level. In light of its excellent track record and exemplary self-evaluation, the school's current capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the quality of assessment of student's competencies in ICT across the whole curriculum in order to identify in greater depth other courses and opportunities available for them to follow.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In lessons, all students consolidate and build very effectively on previous learning. They make outstanding progress in relation to their individual learning and personal development targets. There are no significant differences between boys and girls. Students benefit greatly from small and flexible teaching group arrangements, including, when appropriate, one-to-one sessions. The latter, for example, allowed an older student to improve skills in solving quadratic equations as part of the advanced subsidiary level mathematics course. In a citizenship lesson, students deepened their knowledge and understanding of human rights as a result of a whole-group presentation by the teacher, followed by research activities looking at the United Nations declaration of the human rights of the child. All used ICT as a research tool in a highly effective way. In a singing lesson, students thoroughly enjoyed not only singing 'Oh happy days' in the style of 'Sister Act 2', but also learned about octaves and harmonisation.

The vast majority of students who completed the Ofsted questionnaire said they felt safe in the school, which was also confirmed in the student discussion group with the inspector. Students respond positively to the 'hall of fame' rewards system, where ultimately they make a mould of their own handprint which, once decorated, is put on display and then given to the student on discharge. A whole-school collaborative effort

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involving students and staff resulted in the creation of a large and colourful light box which is displayed in the corridor and 'Ponderland', a part of the school's small outside garden area. Students are involved fully in student and staff school council meetings, and their views on school life and the wider community are listened to and acted upon, for example, the development of the 'Zen' garden area, changes to teaching groups and nominating charities to support. This aspect of the school's work has been recognised by the Investors in Children award. During the current academic year, 52 students have successfully returned to mainstream or special school provision, which is an impressive record.

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

¹ 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?

Excellent teamwork and collaboration between all adults in the room underpins the high-quality teaching. All staff treat students as individuals without judgement or comparison. Consequently, this boosts their self-esteem and results in excellent behaviour and students who are involved in learning and keen to do their best. In a lesson preparing for their forthcoming plant sale, each adult was deployed highly effectively as students moved to different areas of the building to cover various objects, such as chairs, small tables and other everyday objects, in lawn turf or grass. At the start, the lead teacher skilfully identified cross-curricular aspects of this work such as mini-enterprise, the elements required for the growth of grass, as well as aesthetic aspects, including understanding

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installation work as a means of publicity. At the end of the lesson, all were involved in assessment of the task by comparing and contrasting the work of each other. This all contributed to students' various vocational unit awards work. In all lessons seen, teachers were highly adept at ensuring students' individual needs were met fully. As a result, a student told the inspector, 'You feel valued and can achieve.'

The strength of the curriculum is how well it is tailored to students' needs, capabilities and aspirations for the future. This also ensures that in lessons staff can also respond promptly to the subtle changes that may occur in terms of individual students' mental health needs. A poignant example of this was when one student was given 'time out' to hold and stroke one of the school's two pet rabbits (Davina and Lilly), after which there was a seamless return to the task at hand. The curriculum also contributes significantly to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Indicative of this is a student's reflective comment on a piece of art, 'The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.'

Students' health, safety and well-being are at the forefront of the school's ethos of care. All adults work hard to ensure this, helping each individual, including those whose circumstances may make them most vulnerable, in very specific ways. The morning handover sessions between the clinic and school staff inform practice during learning time. This results in all being looked after in an exceptionally safe, healthy and caring environment. A carefully managed and executed programme of reviews is highly effective in supporting every student when they first join the school, as well as when they leave. Parents and carers too are given careful advice and support when needed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

As a result of a programme of very rigorous monitoring and evaluation, the headteacher has ensured the school has built further on the strengths identified at the previous inspection. This is underpinned by an ethos of 'can and will make a difference' and is supported and challenged thoroughly by the school's highly committed management committee. There is a strong awareness of safeguarding among the members of this committee and all staff at the school, particularly in ensuring the risks associated with developing technologies are taken fully into account. In addition, close working with a large number of other professionals and specialist organisations promotes highly effectively students' learning and well-being. The school is an inclusive and supportive family for all who work there and is effective in ensuring all learners have equality of opportunity. It tackles robustly any discrimination and achieves an effective ethos of

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inclusion with no underachievement of any individual student or group. The school's excellent promotion of community cohesion is reflected in students' growing knowledge and understanding of this from a local, wider community and international community perspective. Students create, for instance, HIV and AIDS teaching resources for their peers in Zambia. Given the outcomes the school achieves, it is providing outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Sixth form

There is no separate sixth-form provision. All post-16 students have personalised learning packages and take subjects which enable them to get accreditation in a range of different areas. This also enables them to continue with the specific AS-level, A-level or IB courses they may have been following at their home school. In addition, some lessons with cross-curricular themes are taught in mixed-age groups. Overall effectiveness, outcomes, provision, and leadership and management of the sixth form are no different to the main school.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|---|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 1 |
| Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 1 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 1 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 1 |

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Views of parents and carers

Of the proportion of questionnaires returned, without exception, all parents and carers are happy with all aspects of the school's work. This inspection endorses these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northgate 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 11 statements about the school.

The inspector received 5 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 11 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|-----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 4 | 80 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 2 | 40 | 30 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 4 | 80 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 3 | 60 | 2 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 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) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 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 | 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.



4 July 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Northgate School, Edgware HA8 0AD

Not so long ago, I visited your school to see how well you are getting on. I also wanted to know if I could suggest anything to make things even better for you. I really enjoyed meeting you in lessons and around the school, and was highly impressed with your friendly welcome and interest in what I was doing. I was particularly pleased to hear how well you appreciate the education and opportunities the school provides for you. This was summed up succinctly in my meeting with a small group of you when one of you said, 'You feel valued and can achieve.' In addition, the great majority of all of you who completed the Ofsted questionnaire gave positive responses to all the statements.

I think your school is outstanding. Here are just some of the strengths I identified.

- The headteacher's excellent leadership.
- You make excellent academic and personal progress in all that you do.
- All the staff have your best interests at heart and make sure you are safe.
- Lively and interesting lessons in which all staff provide excellent help and support for all of you.
- The curriculum and other activities provide lots for you to do, enabling you to reach your full potential and support your return to mainstream education.
- The school is highly effective in the way that it works with lots of other people, including your parents and carers, to support you.
- The school has plans to make things even better in the future.

I have identified one area to help improve your learning even more. Therefore, I have asked the school to assess fully your competencies in the use of ICT across the curriculum. All of you, too, can help by continuing to work as well as you are doing now.

I would like to wish all of you best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

James Bowden Lead inspector

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