

Norlington School for Boys

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103098
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	376819
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham HMI

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Pierpoint
Headteacher	Mr John Hernandez
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 February 2009
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 34 parts of lessons and four tutor sessions, taught by 26 teachers. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, leaders and managers, two representatives from the governing body and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, as well as 39 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 112 completed by students and 25 completed by staff.

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

- How accurate is the school's analysis of students' achievement.
- How well students' knowledge and understanding and their application of basic skills are developed across the curriculum.
- How effective the teaching is in raising the achievement of all groups of students.
- The impact that senior and middle leaders have on school improvement.

Information about the school

Norlington School for Boys is a small, inner city comprehensive school. The students come from a wide range of socio-economic, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Most are from minority ethnic groups, mainly from Pakistani, Indian and African heritages. Almost three quarters speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that found nationally. The school gained specialist mathematics status with computing in 2009. It achieved the Healthy Schools award in 2007. Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone a period of instability with several changes to senior and middle management. The school entered into a partnership with a boys' school in Bromley, which was judged to be outstanding at its last inspection. The executive principal of the partner school became executive headteacher working with the current headteacher who was appointed in June 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Norlington is a rapidly improving school. Decisive and determined action has been taken to tackle underperformance since the previous inspection. The governing body and the local authority recognised the school's weaknesses and steps were taken to strengthen leadership and improve teaching and learning, which are now satisfactory. Attainment, although low, is rising quickly and securely. The headteacher and senior leaders, supported by some capable middle leaders, have a clear understanding of what has been achieved and accurately identify areas that need further improvement. Staff morale is high because they recognise the progress that is being made in turning the school around. Students also recognise the recent positive changes that have taken place. They are responding well to higher expectations, confirmed by their good behaviour, improved attendance, the rapid decline in exclusions and the pride they take in wearing their new school uniform. A particular strength of the school is its strong community ethos. Students report that they enjoy coming to school and feel very safe. Relationships between students and staff from different ethnic, social and religious groups are harmonious and mutually supportive.

As a result of closer monitoring, a consistent approach to collecting and analysing data and a drive to make teachers accountable for the progress of the students they teach, the variation in achievement between different groups of students is narrowing. Students enter the school with attainment that is below average but in 2009 and 2010, the GCSE examination results were significantly below average and too many students were making too little progress. Attainment has improved rapidly in 2011, with the proportion of students gaining five or more grades at A* to C including English and mathematics now close to the national average. The proportion of students gaining five or more grades at A* to C is above average, with students achieving particularly well in mathematics and science. Variability across the different curriculum subjects is being tackled through more rigorous monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders. The progress of current students is satisfactory.

Teaching has improved considerably as a result of intensive training and frequent opportunities to observe and share outstanding practice with their partner school. However, the quality of students' learning has not kept pace with the improvements in teaching. Although teachers are able to use a wider range of strategies, they do not always select the most appropriate to meet students' wide ranging needs or amend their teaching in response to the learning that is taking place. Students work well and complete tasks willingly but they are not always challenged sufficiently to

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produce their best work. Teachers provide too much direction in some lessons and do not consistently encourage students to talk about their learning or to work independently. A lack of regular written feedback from a few subject teachers prevents students in these subjects from developing a full understanding of how to improve their work.

The curriculum provides a good range of courses, extra-curricular and enhancement activities. It contributes strongly to students' personal development and well-being, ensuring that almost all students continue to further education, employment or training. Students apply skills in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) well. However, a large proportion of students have weak literacy skills when they enter the school and do not have the breadth of vocabulary needed to develop their speaking and listening skills sufficiently to contribute well to discussions. The school has recently appointed a literacy coordinator and recognises the need for a whole-school approach to literacy development. The school provides good provision for students who are new to learning English as an additional language but there is less support for students who have progressed to more advanced levels of English language development.

Recent improvements to the school's performance are largely due to the inspirational and determined leadership of the headteacher and the highly successful arrangements with the partner school. There is a strong sense of purpose amongst staff to bring about and sustain further improvement. The rising trend in students' achievement, the effective development of teaching and learning and increasingly accurate self-evaluation underpins the satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of learning so that it is consistently good for all groups and across all subjects by:
 - providing greater levels of challenge for all students
 - creating more opportunities for students to talk about their learning and develop subject-specific vocabulary
 - increasing students' participation and engagement in their learning so that they are better able to work independently
 - making sure that teachers mark written work regularly so that students get detailed feedback on how to improve it.
- Provide high quality literacy support across subjects, with a particular focus on developing basic skills and providing support for students at the advanced stages of speaking English as an additional language.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In the majority of lessons, the quality of learning was satisfactory. Progress varies across subjects but by the time they leave school, students generally make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Students have good attitudes to learning although they are held back in some subjects by weak literacy and oral skills which prevent them from engaging fully in all lessons. When teachers provide them with the correct level of challenge, students become actively involved in their learning and make good progress. As a result of recent improvements in teaching and learning, an increasing number are making better than expected progress, particularly in mathematics and science. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive personalised intervention and guidance, which makes an important contribution to the quality of their learning and allows them to make the same progress as their peers. Students enjoy school and their achievement overall is satisfactory.

The school is effective in promoting the values of respect and responsibility, and students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is calm and orderly even when students have to negotiate narrow staircases. Students identify the need for more space as the aspect that would most improve their experience of school. Bullying, racism or discrimination is rare and if incidents occur, they are dealt with promptly. Students value the excellent relationships they have with the staff and are confident that there is always someone to talk to if they have concerns. They have a good understanding of the risks that have an impact on their physical and mental health and emotional well-being, and recognise the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise.

A large number of students are involved in extra-curricular activities, particularly sports events which are exceptionally popular. The school has achieved national awards in cricket and basketball and the wide ranging sporting activities develop a range of team building and leadership skills. Strong links with the local community are used well to raise students' awareness, for example, through mentoring and work with local, national and international charities. Skills in applying numeracy and ICT are developed well and with improving attendance, contribute satisfactorily to students' future economic well-being. Almost all students transfer to further education, training or employment.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The rigorous and intensive package of support to improve teaching and learning has improved the pace of lessons and broadened the range of teaching styles. The most successful teachers use accurate assessments of what students have already learnt and what they are capable of achieving to plan their lessons. They select appropriate activities that match the needs and abilities of the students in their classes. However, when teachers do not consistently check the learning and understanding of all students as the lesson progresses, the quality of students' learning does not move on quickly enough. In these lessons, students respond passively and do not develop enough skills to work independently.

The most effective teachers use questioning to open up and extend discussion and they encourage students to talk about the subject by modelling appropriate phrases and reinforcing specific vocabulary. Interactive whiteboards are used in most lessons but mainly for displaying information rather than as a tool for involving students in learning. Precise and detailed written feedback allows students to take responsibility for improving their work and motivates them to try harder but this is not consistent across all subjects. Where work is left unmarked for long periods, students continue to work at the same level for too long, often repeating errors or misconceptions.

Senior leaders review the curriculum regularly to make sure that it responds to the needs of different students. Vocational subjects develop broad-ranging skills and help to raise achievement. Opportunities to study a range of languages are well

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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supported. Recent initiatives to introduce mathematics at AS level and to develop provision for separate sciences are meeting the needs of more-able students well. Literacy support, particularly for reading, is being used effectively in Years 7 and 8, although this is less well developed for older students.

Good arrangements for care, guidance and support make a strong contribution to students’ wider outcomes. As a result of rigorous monitoring, behaviour is managed very well and very few students are persistently absent. Clearly targeted support improves the confidence, self-esteem and achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and potentially vulnerable students. Good systems are in place to help students make the transition from primary school and to make well-informed choices about their future.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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 provides the school with high quality leadership and is well supported by other members of the senior team and the executive headteacher. Rigorous processes to monitor students’ achievement and the quality of teaching and learning are providing a more accurate view of the school’s strengths and areas for development. Effective actions have been taken to develop the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders and involve them in evaluating performance in their subject areas. Some variability and a few weaknesses remain but these are being tackled well.

The governing body has provided a high level of challenge in identifying previous underperformance and is proactive in working with the local authority and the partner school. Governors are working hard to increase their visibility across the school and to establish secure links with subject areas.

A commitment to ensuring the safety of students and to promoting equality of opportunity is well established. The statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and the systems in place are coherent and effective. The school works well with a range of external agencies, such as health and social services, to promote the safety, health and welfare of all students. Leaders track the achievement of different groups carefully and take determined action to reduce any variation. As a result, patterns of achievement are becoming more consistent.

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The school has a clear understanding of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and is effective in promoting community cohesion. The school actively encourages parents to engage with the school and has been effective in engaging them, for example, in reducing persistent absence, improving students’ punctuality and in supporting the new school uniform.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

A very small proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. A very large majority of those who responded feel that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. Inspection evidence supports this view. A few parents and carers were concerned that their children were not making enough progress. Inspection evidence shows that current students are making satisfactory progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Norlington School for Boys 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 470 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	41	20	51	3	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	41	21	54	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	36	17	44	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	38	17	44	5	13	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	12	31	21	54	3	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	13	33	21	54	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	41	16	41	4	10	1	3
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)	14	36	17	44	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	8	21	25	64	3	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	31	20	51	3	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	28	21	54	4	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	33	20	51	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	15	38	19	49	3	8	1	3

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



30 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Norlington School for Boys, Leytonstone, E10 6JZ.

Thank you for the friendly and polite welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, visiting some of your lessons and looking around the school.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and we found that the school has improved considerably in the past year. We were impressed with the respect that you show each other and your commitment to the community. You told us that you feel safe and happy in school and that you have an excellent relationship with your teachers. Your behaviour around the school is good despite having so little space and having to negotiate such narrow staircases.

Learning, although satisfactory, is improving. You work well in lessons but we have asked teachers to provide you with more opportunities to talk about your learning and encourage you to work more independently. You told us that you make the most progress in lessons where you are challenged to think for yourselves. We agree and have asked the teachers to do this more often. We have also asked them to make sure that your written work is marked more regularly so that you get detailed feedback in all subjects on how to improve it.

Although examination results are improving, particularly in mathematics and science, there are still a few subjects where you could attain higher results. We have asked subject leaders to make sure that the skills that you need in writing, reading, listening and speaking are supported in all subjects, especially for students who do not enjoy writing and those who have learned English well but want to become even better at using it.

The headteacher and his colleagues have achieved much in the past year. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and know what to do next to continue the school's improvement.

You can help the school improve by talking to your teachers and each other about your learning and about what helps you to learn best. We wish you all at Norlington a very happy and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector

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