

# Nightingale School

Beechcroft Road, Tooting, London, SW17 7DF

**Inspection dates** 19–20 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Strong leadership by the headteacher and her senior team have created a clear vision for the future of the school, and improved learning and achievement.
- Improved monitoring systems have ensured that students' progress is beginning to accelerate.
- All groups of students are now making good progress, often from low starting points. Progress is faster in English than in mathematics, due to the focus on improving students' literacy in all lessons.
- The governors provide a good level of challenge and support to senior leaders. They ensure that government funding is well spent for the benefit of all groups of students.
- As a result of good leadership and teaching, students' progress is beginning to accelerate, and many make better than expected progress. In the best lessons, activities are interesting and varied, students are challenged so that they work quickly, and adults support them well.
- Behaviour is good. Students feel safe and that adults manage their difficulties well. Parents are positive about the outcomes for their children.
- The school provides a wide selection of vocational courses that are very well matched to students' needs.
- The sixth form is good. It ensures that students are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not always find their lessons motivating, and sometimes need clearer feedback to help them understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Support staff are not always used effectively to extend learning. There are some inconsistencies in how staff apply school policies.
- Staff do not always make effective use of information on students' progress in order to provide swift support where it is needed.
- Although improving, student attendance remains low.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 11 lessons, all of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with two groups of students.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and chair of the curriculum committee, representatives from the local authority, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and the safer schools' police officer.
- There were too few submissions to the online questionnaire (Parent View), but inspectors took account of the school's own surveys of parents and carers. Returns from 40 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.
- The inspectors evaluated documentation, including information on the students' current progress, the curriculum and development plans, as well as procedures and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Andy Lole, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Scott

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Nightingale is a special school for boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). All students have a statement of special educational needs. Many have additional learning needs.
- Since the last inspection, the school has amalgamated with the primary special school Elsley School (also for those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties) with which it was formally federated.
- Following a period of just over a year when the current headteacher was acting as the temporary headteacher, she was appointed to this role permanently in March 2013.
- The majority of students do not start at the school until aged between 12 and 14 years. On average, students have attended four different schools before arriving at Nightingale School.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic heritages is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (those eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent or carer in the armed services) is over three times the national average. There are no students from service families currently in the school.
- All Year 7 students are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The school has developed a wide range of psychological therapies, including art, drama and music therapy, which are available to individual students, family therapy and parent counselling for parents and carers and family groups. Speech and language, and occupational therapy are provided.
- Three quarters of sixth form students are dually registered with alternative providers delivered by Carlshalton College, South Thames College, Lambeth College, and Ernest Bevin School. In addition, these students spend at least one day working on basic skills and receiving one-to-one pastoral support at Nightingale School.
- The school has extensive facilities including a farm, boxing gym, hairdressing salon and a painting and decorating department.
- The school provides alternative provision for students from mainstream and special schools specialising in vocational skills including motor mechanics and bricklaying.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so all students can make the best possible progress in English and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that all lessons have activities that motivate students to try their hardest
  - providing clear feedback in marking so students know how to improve their work
  - increasing the emphasis on learning mathematics across all subjects
  - making sure that teaching assistants are actively deployed in lessons in order to maximise learning.
- Further strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
  - ensuring greater consistency of practice in following school policies in regard to behaviour management and the use of teaching and learning strategies
  - ensuring all staff make effective use of information on students' progress in order to provide

swift support where it is needed

improving student attendance still further by continuing to work in partnership with students, their families and other agencies.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Prior to starting at Nightingale, many students have attended several schools, which has disrupted their learning and contributed to their often low levels of skills on entry. Although the academic levels they reach remains below average by the time they leave the school, all groups of students make at least expected progress in English and mathematics, and a significant number are making good progress.
- In 2012, for the first time in the school's history, one student obtained five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, and three students obtained five GCSE passes at grades A\* to G, including English and mathematics. Results from the school's own surveys indicate that parents are very satisfied with the progress their children are making.
- Students make fastest progress in reading and writing; this is partly due to the teaching of literacy across all subjects. For example, in a Year 7 history lesson, students responded extremely well to the teacher's high expectations by being able to read set passages aloud, and then extract meaning from some challenging vocabulary that described what might have motivated young Roman boys to join the army. Students make less progress in mathematics, which is not taught in all subjects.
- The provision of a range of therapeutic interventions, along with the school's change in approach to a more reflective way of understanding and managing behaviour, has contributed strongly to enable students to make good progress in their emotional and social development.
- The breadth of subjects that are offered to students, which has been extended since the last inspection, enables them to gain as wide range of skills and knowledge. Accredited courses are run for all subjects at either BTEC or GCSE. A real strength of the school is its ability to provide such a tremendous variety of vocational courses, which include hairdressing, bricklaying, land-based studies, motor mechanics, catering, and painting and decorating. This training, as well as helping to prepare students for the world of work, gives them a good range of practical skills for the next stage of their life.
- The majority of students in Year 11 stay on into the sixth form. Three quarters of sixth form students spend part of their time studying off-site. They make good progress with all four providers. Effective arrangements for checking their work, attendance, punctuality and behaviour are in place. When they leave, almost all students go into employment or gain some form of accredited vocational qualification or college placement. Excellent links, with such places as local schools and colleges, support training well.
- Students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding make similar progress to their peers in the school, as a result of the support they have received to improve their reading skills, which on average are two years behind their chronological age when they arrive at the school. Progress in lessons is usually good and the gap between these pupils' current level of attainment and that expected for their age is closing, particularly in English. All groups, including those from minority ethnic groups or receiving free school meals, are making equally good progress.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Students achieve well because most lessons are well planned to meet their individual needs, and adults provide good support to enable students to develop and maintain good attitudes to their own learning. In the strongest lessons, teachers explain clearly their very high expectations for learning and behaviour, plan tasks that are interesting and relevant to the group and set time limits for the completion of each part of the lesson. They ask questions that challenge the students to extend their thinking and give regular recognition for good learning and social behaviour.
- Staff work very hard to develop positive relationships with the students. New students arrive

throughout the year, requiring adults to quickly adapt their management of groups when this happens. Where difficulties occur, these are managed well by teachers and teaching assistants, resulting in minimum disruption to learning. Classrooms are generally calm and students are keen to learn.

- Whole-school systems that identify what students have achieved and how well they are progressing over a period of time have recently been established. These show increasingly good rates of progress. This information is beginning to enable all members of staff to see where progress is strongest and where additional support is required. Feedback to students about the work they have recently completed and what they could do to improve it is not always done in a consistent way across the school.
- The older students identified that they learnt best in fun practical lessons. One of the primary pupils said, 'the school just feels right – we learn new things we didn't know'.
- In a few lessons, teaching assistants were not well deployed. As a result, students either did not get as much support as they needed and became distracted from their work, or they were given too much, which restricted the opportunity to learn on their own.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is usually good. Although attendance has improved since the last inspection, it is still too low. When students begin to travel to school on their own, attendance can decline. The school has worked very hard to address this issue, for example by increasing the time the education welfare officer is based at the school, and rewarding students who maintain high levels of attendance.
- The school has good systems for recording, monitoring and communicating behaviour incidents and concerns. Information from this process is beginning to be used to identify patterns of behaviour difficulties, and could be used further to help measure the impact of the school's work in reducing incidents over time. Fixed-term exclusions have reduced year on year over the last four years.
- Students told inspectors that there is very little bullying in the school, and when it occurs, staff deal with it well. They all feel that the school is a safe place to be. Some of the older students were able to articulate the impact of high staff turnover and how it is taking time to build relationships with new teachers. The students are very proud of their smart new uniform that they were responsible for designing, which replaced a more casual outfit.
- In a recent survey, parents and carers felt that the school manages behaviour well. One parent stated, reflecting the views of several, 'I am very happy with my son's progress in speech and managing his behaviour'.
- The local safer school's police officer regularly visits the school to build relationships with the students, and talk to them about issues such as stop-and-search procedures and what it is like to be a victim of crime. He also takes an active part in meetings where students need additional support, and sometimes helps resolve difficulties between students by arranging for them to talk together about what happened.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The senior management team have developed a shared vision of how the school will meet the wide range of students' needs. The determination of the headteacher to make the school a success is the driving force behind its improvement. She expects the best and has worked tirelessly to raise staff morale and instil a 'can-do' ethos focused on students' achievement and well-being which does not accept failure as an option. Despite a period of high staff turnover since the last inspection, the school demonstrates a strong capacity to make further improvements.
- The headteacher has created an effective leadership team who are working together very successfully building the skills and confidence of the staff team through individually tailored

support and training. Because this team is newly formed, it has yet to demonstrate the full impact of recent initiatives over time. The strong multidisciplinary team approach provides additional support for students and their families, and also helps teachers adapt their teaching approaches to best meet students' needs.

- Senior staff have worked effectively to introduce a more consistent approach to ensuring all staff follow school policies and procedures. However, staff members, students and inspectors found some inconsistencies in approach still remain relating to behaviour management and teaching and learning strategies adopted.
- The range of subjects has continued to be extended, with particular emphasis on students learning through practical means. Literacy is now taught very well across all subject areas. For example, the breakfast club provides good opportunities for students to discuss and reflect on current affairs and communicate their own experiences and feelings, in order to develop their self-confidence and social skills. Since the last inspection, links with other sixth form providers have much improved so that these students are now much more likely to reach their full potential.
- The school's monitoring of teaching involves students completing regular assessment tasks, and classroom visits by senior and middle managers.
- The school is well supported by the local authority. They run a twice-yearly review of the school, with the involvement of staff from a variety of related professional backgrounds. Through this, and the work of the link inspector, the local authority has an accurate picture of how well the school is doing, and where it can offer further support.
- There are strong structures in place for managing teachers' performance. Only those teachers who meet the required high standards, as judged by the headteacher, are able to move up the salary scale. Where weaker teaching is identified, the school takes necessary steps to ensure improvement. The headteacher has robustly tackled weaknesses in teaching.
- Senior leaders and the governing body ensure that all safeguarding procedures are securely in place, meet statutory requirements and are rigorously applied. All members of staff promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community and are proactive in tackling all forms of discrimination. For example, students report that incidents of racist name calling are rare. When they do occur, all staff members deal with them firmly and effectively.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The newly formed governing body has provided good support and challenge to the school. Using the knowledge that several governors have of other schools, they have quickly gained a good understanding of where Nightingale School needs to strengthen its practice, and have worked closely with the senior leaders to address these areas. This has included developing systems for tracking academic progress, and ensuring that the vocational centre has a sound business plan. Governors ensure that the school manages finances well, including funding for students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium. The governing body is fully involved in ensuring that there is a close link between salary progression and the effectiveness of classroom teaching. Governors visit the school often and undertake joint observations of teaching with senior staff make sure that teaching is of a high standard. Training in understanding how the school measures progress is provided by senior staff, and the local authority has provided advice and support for new governors.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131594
<b>Local authority</b>	Wandsworth
<b>Inspection number</b>	400225

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	84
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	19
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Neil Munro
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alina Page
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 874 9096
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