



Nailsea School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109310
LEA North Somerset
Inspection number 278180
Inspection dates 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005
Reporting inspector Nick Green HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Mizzymead Road
School category	Community		Nailsea
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		Bristol BS48 2HN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01275 852251
Number on roll	1397	Fax number	01275 854512
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Alan Walker
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr David New

Age group 11 to 19	Inspection dates 9 November 2005 - 10 November 2005	Inspection number 278180
------------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two HMIs and three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Nailsea School is a large mixed comprehensive school. It has Technology and Media Arts Specialist College status and has a 'Leading Aspect Award' for active citizenship. It takes pupils from a mainly prosperous area. Virtually all pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above the national average and, of these, 14 have statements of special educational needs. The majority of pupils have above average attainment on entry to the school and there are a number of gifted and talented pupils in all year groups.

A new headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges its overall effectiveness to be good; inspectors judge it to be satisfactory. This is because although the standards reached by pupils are generally above average, they do not make as much progress as they could by the end of Year 11 and Year 13.

In many respects, the school is successful. In particular, it promotes pupils' personal development and well-being; this is done very well in the sixth form. The care, support and guidance provided for pupils are also good. The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and feel it provides a safe environment in which to learn. They participate in a wide range of stimulating cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and sixth form students readily take on valuable and challenging roles supporting younger students. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at all key stages. The school's curriculum is good and relevant to most pupils' needs; increased flexibility and choice has been introduced in Key Stage 4 but not yet in the sixth form.

The school is led well by the relatively new headteacher, who is providing a clear sense of direction that is focused on raising achievement. He is supported by a leadership team, which has a strong and collective sense of purpose. The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies many of the school's strengths but it judges its performance in some key areas too highly. Monitoring and evaluation of performance has not been strong in the past but is improving, though sufficiently challenging targets have yet to be set in all key stages. The school receives a relatively low level of revenue in comparison to national averages and it manages its resources well, providing good value for money.

The school has a clear view about where it needs to focus its energies and is well placed for further progress. The issues raised in the last inspection report have been addressed generally satisfactorily. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is no longer unsatisfactory and improvements have been made, particularly in mathematics, science and English. Pupils' progress and achievement in Key Stage 3 are now satisfactory. However, the consistency of monitoring and evaluation by middle managers is still an area for development as is the extent to which they are held to account.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Significant numbers of students attain very high standards and a large proportion progress to higher education. However, the performance of students varies considerably from year to year and is average overall. Pastoral leadership of the sixth form is strong and the personal development and well being of students is outstanding. Most Year 12 students continue their studies in Year 13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and in a few subjects they are very good. An effective range of teaching strategies is employed, though a minority of teaching lacks sufficient planning and structure. The quality of feedback to students on their progress in some subjects is very good, though overall it is too variable. Opportunities for teamwork are made in

many lessons, but generally insufficient attention is given to enabling students to work more independently and develop their study skills; this impedes the progress of weaker students. A good range of advanced-level subjects is offered but there is currently no provision for students seeking qualifications at a lower level. The school is committed to broadening the range of courses it offers but developments are at an early stage. Careers guidance also needs to be strengthened.

What the school should do to improve further

- set more challenging targets in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form to raise pupils' aspirations and achievement
- strengthen systems of observing and monitoring lessons, in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning to match the best in the school
- monitor and evaluate the school's performance more rigorously and consistently to identify more precisely areas for improvement
- in the sixth form, improve the consistency of feedback to students on their progress, develop their ability to work more independently and improve their study skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

On entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' attainment is above average. By the end of Year 9 achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have been reaching above average standards for some time, but without always making as much progress as they could. However, the most recent results for English, mathematics and science show a marked improvement in attainment. Standards in English have improved significantly, largely because of changes to teaching approaches and aspects of the curriculum.

Pupils' GCSE results at the end of Year 11 are significantly above national averages. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory in relation to their capabilities on entry as they do not make as much progress as they could, though progress in Key Stage 4 is generally stronger than in Key Stage 3. The school is right to acknowledge in its self-assessment that progress can be even greater and attainment considerably higher. This is already a reality in many GCSE subjects, where a large percentage of pupils gained A*-C passes in 2004, far in excess of national figures. However, other subjects served pupils less well.

In the sixth form, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Results vary from year to year, being above average in 2004 but significantly lower in the preceding and following years. Arrangements for tracking students' academic progress have only recently become satisfactory.

Good support for all pupils ensures that progress is broadly the same for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are particularly talented. Although targets for pupils' standards in Year 9 and 11 were met in 2005, they were not as challenging as they could have been. The current target for 2006 GCSE results is suitably high, though those for Key Stage 3 and the sixth form are not.

The school's specialist status contributes positively to attainment. It is increasing the take-up of successful media arts courses and has promoted the effective use of Information and Communication Technology across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The personal development of pupils is good and outstanding for sixth form students. Attendance levels are above average and continue to rise. Pupils conduct themselves very well in lessons and around school. They display positive attitudes and clearly enjoy school.

Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Aspects of this are outstanding, notably the cultural and spiritual awareness pupils gain from the school's highly extensive programme of activities, particularly those for the sixth form. For example, the work on citizenship, environmental action, visits to Auschwitz, and involvement with faith groups and Asian performing arts groups give pupils an exceptional range of experiences.

Pupils assume responsibilities well. They show good skills in working with other pupils, mentoring them or acting as teaching assistants in tutor time. The school council is highly effective. Many pupils gain extra confidence and new skills through involvement in the extra-curricular activities offered by the school. The development of healthy lifestyles and personal safety is satisfactory. Some aspects are good, for instance the willingness of pupils with specific health needs to refer themselves for support in school or the community. In contrast, pupils cannot easily pursue healthy eating habits while school meals provision remains limited and dominated by fast food.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, during the inspection, some outstanding lessons were observed and none were unsatisfactory. In nearly all, teachers exhibited very good subject knowledge. They organise lessons generally well and a number include plenty of challenging and varied activities. Very good relationships between pupils and teachers are evident in most. Teachers generally manage behaviour well, but sometimes do not deal effectively with low levels of disruption and consequently pupils' learning suffers. A significant minority of lessons lack pace so that learning is not sharp enough. Sometimes, the needs of different groups of pupils in the class are not fully addressed, particularly if work is too theoretical and restricts their understanding.

Most teachers set pupils clear individual targets, which they know. However, the quality of their marking of pupils' work is variable. As a result, pupils do not always understand

what they need to do to improve. Teachers are becoming more skilled in using information on pupils' achievement to set group targets for raising standards.

Managers know the strengths and weaknesses of teachers, but systems for observing and monitoring teaching are not sufficiently rigorous to be fully effective in raising the quality of all teaching to that of the best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Overall, the curriculum is good. The new curriculum in Year 10 is effectively meeting the needs of all groups of pupils. It offers sufficient choice and flexibility and good alternative opportunities for pupils with different interests and abilities. Its blend of academic and vocational courses should enable all pupils to pursue the most suitable pathways of education after the end of Year 11. However, while the school is committed to broadening the range of courses it offers in the sixth form, developments are at an early stage.

The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is well thought out, building particularly well on the work pupils do in their primary schools. Some innovative activities, resulting from the school's new specialist status, are being introduced. These are enhancing significantly pupils' experiences in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are catered for well as are those who are particularly talented.

The range of extra-curricular activities offered is very good and pupils' participation in them high. In sport, and elsewhere, students have outstanding opportunities to excel. They also make very good contributions to the local community. Work experience is a strength, contributing well to preparing pupils for their future economic well-being in addition to them learning about economic enterprise in a number of subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school provides a high level of care, support and guidance. Pupils and students state that they feel very safe in school. This is largely as a result of the school's strong anti-bullying stance and the practice of dealing with any intimidation swiftly and effectively.

The promotion and monitoring of health and safety is given a high priority in the school. There are effective systems in place to assist with risk assessment and governors take an active role in this. Child protection arrangements are secure and clear systems exist to ensure that all staff understand the school's procedures. Vulnerable pupils and those who may require additional help with their behavioral difficulties are supported very well, particularly by the inclusion support unit. The school works effectively with local action groups to address community issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancies. This is supplemented well by presentations

to pupils by specialist visiting speakers and a range of beneficial peer mentoring schemes.

Form tutors and heads of year play a pivotal role in providing pastoral and academic support and hold regular tutorials to discuss targets and to monitor pupils' personal development. New target tracking systems are assisting this process well. Liaison with parents is good through both the regular meetings with tutors and subject teachers and the meetings of the Nailsea School Association.

The guidance provided to help Year 9 pupils make their choices for GCSE subjects is effective. Careers guidance is satisfactory, though it needs to be strengthened further, particularly in the sixth form.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is led well by the relatively new headteacher who is providing a clear sense of direction that is focused on raising achievement. He is supported by a leadership team, that has a strong and collective sense of purpose. Together, they have appropriately identified the need to improve teaching and learning and to create a curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. Raising pupils' aspirations and teachers' expectations of pupils are also key priorities.

The school's comprehensive self-evaluation has taken good account of the views of pupils, staff, parents and the Local Education Authority. However, it has not accurately identified the progress pupils make in relation to their attainment on entry to the school and in some key areas it judges the school's performance too highly. Recent targets have been met but they are not as challenging as they could be in all key stages. More rigorous reviews of curriculum areas and greater accountability of the teachers who manage them are beginning to be established. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching is also being strengthened.

The school's leaders are effective in promoting equality of opportunity and the personal development and well-being of all pupils. The school strives to be inclusive in enabling all pupils to have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. However, the absence of lower level courses in the sixth form curriculum means that not all learners have equal access to post-16 provision.

Resources are generally deployed well to achieve good value for money and wise use has been made of the funding arising from the achievement of specialist school status.

The governing body is able, committed and supportive of the school and is aware of the need to improve pupils' achievement. Governors make a significant contribution to development and improvement planning. However, until recently they have not sought enough information about the school's performance to enable them to set the school sufficiently demanding targets.

Whilst the great majority of parents are supportive of the school and feel they are consulted, a small minority judge that behaviour in the school is not good and that the school does not seek their views or those of their children. However, inspectors

judge that the school does take good account of parents' and pupils' views and behaviour is good.

The growing strength of leadership and management and the strategies drawn up to bring about improvements make the school well placed for further progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	1
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The attendance of learners	2	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	3
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	3
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	No
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Nailsea School Mizzymead Road Nailsea North Somerset BS48 2HN

21 November 2005

Dear students

We would like to thank you for your contributions to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting members of year groups and we learned a great deal from our discussions with many of you in lessons and around the school.

In many respects, the school is successful; we were impressed by your personal development and well-being, particularly that of sixth form students. The school's highly extensive programme of activities, for example, on citizenship and environmental action, and visits to places such as Auschwitz, give you an exceptional range of cultural and spiritual experiences. The work of the highly effective school council and the skills older students demonstrate in mentoring younger students show you assume responsibilities well. The school provides a high level of care, support and guidance and the great majority of you say you enjoy coming to school and feel it provides a good environment in which to learn.

The curriculum you are offered is good and relevant to most of your needs. However, the increased flexibility and choice that has been introduced in Key Stage 4 needs to be extended to the sixth form. The quality of teaching and learning is variable but satisfactory at all key stages. Some lessons are outstanding but a significant minority lack pace and the needs of different groups of students in the class are not always met, particularly if lessons are too theoretical. Overall, your school provides you with a satisfactory education. While the standards reached by most students are above average, not all make as much progress as they could by the end of Year 11 and Year 13. Your headteacher and the senior staff are aware of this and are providing a clear sense of direction that is focused on raising achievement.

In order for the school to improve, students in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form need to be set more challenging targets to raise their aspirations and achievement. The senior staff need to strengthen their systems of observing and monitoring lessons in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning to match the best in the school. The school's performance needs to be monitored and evaluated more rigorously and consistently to identify more precisely the areas for improvement. In the sixth form, the consistency of feedback to students on their progress needs to be improved; they need to be helped to develop their ability to work more independently and to improve their study skills.

We wish you the best for the future.

Nick Green HMI