



Notley High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115227
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279548
Inspection dates 8 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Anthony Knight LI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Notley Road
School category	Community		CM7 1WY
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01376556300
Number on roll	1273	Fax number	01376550991
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. David Gask
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Simon Thompson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior management team, the curriculum leaders for English and mathematics, the co-ordinator for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, the chair of the governing body and the school council. Lessons were visited and informal discussions were held with members of staff and pupils. A registration period and break-times were observed. Pupils' work was examined and a range of documents scrutinised.

Description of the school

Notley High School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-16 years. The school is larger than most comprehensive schools without a sixth form and has 1273 pupils. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is about half the national average. Relatively few pupils are from ethnic minority groups and very few pupils do not have English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average and the percentage of pupils with a statement is similar to the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Notley High School is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils and staff are rightly proud of their school. The school is accurate in judging its overall effectiveness as good. Good leadership and teaching have enabled good standards to be achieved. The school is giving appropriate attention to improving the quality of teaching within and across all subjects so that all teaching matches the best of that already being provided. The ongoing improvement of the assessment data is also helping to increase pupils' progress. The staff work very well together and provide a good level of care for all pupils. Pupils' personal development is good and pupils enjoy coming to school. All pupils benefit considerably from an outstanding curriculum that includes a wide range of learning opportunities. Good progress is made by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Very effective partnerships have been developed with other institutions and agencies. The school is right in giving priority now to ensuring all pupils and parents feel fully involved in the work of the school. This inspection confirms the judgements made by the school and endorses the actions being taken by the school to secure further improvement. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and provides good value for money.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall with significant areas of strength. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 has been significantly above the national average for the last five years. Pupils enter school with broadly average attainment and make good progress overall. Good standards were achieved in 2005 in science and English. The overall standard achieved in mathematics was slightly lower than the other two subjects, mainly as a result of fewer pupils achieving the highest levels compared to other maintained schools. While good progress was made overall, the school's challenging targets for Key Stage 3 were narrowly missed in 2005. Overall attainment in Key Stage 4 has been significantly above the national average, for the last three years. Pupils have consistently made very good progress overall from Key Stage 2, and in 2005 this progress placed the school in the top 12% of all maintained schools. Many pupils made significant progress, particularly the middle ability group. The percentage of pupils achieving at least five A*- C grades at GCSE increased and was above the national average. However, the percentage of pupils achieving at least five passes fell in 2005 and was just above the national average. The percentage of pupils who achieved at least five A*- C grades including English and mathematics also fell in 2005 and was below the national average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils feel safe and enjoy school, particularly the wide range of enrichment activities. The behaviour of pupils

around the school is outstanding. They wait sensibly for each other where movement becomes more congested and are friendly and courteous to staff and visitors. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good overall. They work well together and are keen to talk about their work. A range of extra-curricular visits and visitors is helping pupils appreciate the diversity of other cultures. However, while pupils consider spiritual issues, some opportunities are missed for pupils to reflect more deeply on personal views and the views of others. The school council and year councils make a significant contribution to the school. Pupils are aware of the importance of exercise and many are involved in sporting activities. They are aware of the need for healthy eating but the school recognises there is some way to go before all pupils are eating healthily. The extensive opportunities to develop information technology and communication (ICT) skills and the increasing involvement in enterprise activities prepare pupils well for life beyond school. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are very positive working relationships between pupils and teachers. Lessons are well structured and managed effectively. Good references are made to learning targets and pupils are generally helped to understand what they need to do to reach a higher standard of work. Some teachers have excellent lesson plans which define exactly what is expected of different ability groups within the class so that all are extended and supported appropriately. They use excellent questioning techniques and sequence tasks effectively so that understanding and skills are developed progressively. The school is working to extend this excellent practice across the school. There is extensive data on pupil attainment. The impact of this data on pupils' learning is being increased further through the development of more detailed information for mathematics, English and science and more consistent information across all the other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum and other activities are outstanding. Pupils speak very highly of the opportunities available to them and of the way that the curriculum has been matched closely to their individual interests and learning needs. There is a wide range of well attended extracurricular activities and events. Very effective partnerships have been developed with other institutions so that there are clear pathways for pupils to continue study beyond the school. The personal, social and health education programme and the citizenship curriculum are well planned and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development and well-being. Technology College Status has helped the school to develop the provision for ICT across the school so that pupils are able to work independently at school and continue their work effectively at home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. There are robust systems for ensuring pupils' safety and security, especially in respect to child protection procedures. Very good partnerships with external agencies help the school assess the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and of vulnerable pupils, and plan appropriate provision and support. Pupils' personal development is regularly reviewed by tutors and heads of year. Personal targets are set, and monitored, where needed. The targets for academic attainment are sound and the further detail and consistency being developed will enable these to be used even more effectively. Parents are kept fully informed about the progress of their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good with several outstanding features. There is a very strong collegiate senior management team ably led by the headteacher. The management structure effectively brings together academic and pastoral areas of responsibility so that all aspects of pupils' experiences in the school are considered and appropriate actions taken. The monitoring of teaching is thorough and accurate. The school knows itself well and is clear about what needs to be done to further increase its effectiveness. The governing body provides very good support to the school. Governors have designated areas of responsibility and increasingly have acted as critical friend to the school. The response from parents in the inspection questionnaire was very positive overall, with several parents expressing high praise for the school. However, a significant minority of responses expressed concern over some aspects of the work of the school. Some respondents felt that the school did not take sufficient account of the views of pupils and some felt the same about the views of parents. A few did not agree that the behaviour of pupils was good. All areas of concern were discussed with the school and considered carefully throughout the inspection. The inspectors did not find any evidence to support these concerns, but it is clear that more attention needs to be given to making sure all pupils and parents feel involved in the school. The school had already identified this as a key area for improvement.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
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

We enjoyed coming to your school and talking with many of you. We were pleased to see the excellent way you behaved around the school and how many of you contributed much to your lessons. Our visit focused on the judgements made by your school about what it sees as strengths and what needs further development. We were able to endorse completely these judgements and agree that Notley High is a good school with several excellent features. We particularly liked the extracurricular opportunities and the curriculum provision which enable you to follow your own interests and learning needs in Key Stage 4. There are also excellent links with other institutions and agencies. Your school knows that the excellent teaching you experience in some lessons needs to be developed in all lessons. More work is also taking place to refine the assessment information that the school uses to make sure you all do as well as you can. Your school is aware that some of you feel that your views are not listened to and that some of your parents and carers feel the same. Your headteacher will make sure that you and your parents are involved more fully. This had already been identified as a priority by your school. It is clear that your school knows what you need and what to do to improve the school even further. You have helped make the school good and can also help now to make it even better. I wish you all the very best for the future.