



London Nautical School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100642
Local Authority Lambeth
Inspection number 285837
Inspection dates 23–24 November 2006
Reporting inspector Jennifer Smith HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	61 Stamford Street
School category	Foundation		Blackfriars
Age range of pupils	11–18		London SE1 9NA
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	02079286801
Number on roll (school)	654	Fax number	02072619408
Number on roll (6th form)	85		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Andrew Cox
		Headteacher	Mr Gordon Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	23–24 November 2006	285837

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The London Nautical School is a very popular, smaller than average school in the north of the borough, which is heavily over subscribed. The sixth form increased in size in September 2006. The school serves a very wide catchment area stretching as far as Barnet to the north and Bromley to the south. Approximately two thirds of students are White British and the proportion of students entitled to free school meals is slightly higher than the national average. Just over four percent of students have a statement of special educational need, slightly higher than the national average. During the last year the school has undergone considerable new building work, adding a new sixth form centre, sports hall and new classrooms. The school was awarded specialist status for sports in September 2003.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good, improving and very popular school. Its strong community ethos is rooted in its nautical and maritime traditions of orderly behaviour based on courteous, respectful relationships. The main school provides a good standard of education with students making good progress from Year 7 to 11. Standards achieved at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are well above national averages. Students arrive at the school with slightly above national average levels of attainment. They are motivated to learn and want to do well. As good attendance and parents verify, students enjoy coming to school, are happy there and value the friendliness and support they receive. As a result they respond confidently and enthusiastically to challenges and opportunities, particularly the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided through the Sports College; the maritime facilities on the Thames and the extensive links the school has built with London city businesses. They use the opportunities afforded by their active school council, peer mentoring (students who counsel and support other students) and the prefect system, to develop their leadership skills. The school recognised that standards were not good enough and implemented a range of strategies to improve teaching and learning. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good overall. Most lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and a variety of engaging activities. The best teaching gives students clear feedback on how to improve their work but this is inconsistent across the school. The school has started to tackle this through a revised marking policy and staff training. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is much better now as a result of a more appropriate and wider range of courses beyond traditional academic GCSE examinations. The headteacher has spent much time and energy over the last few years to secure additional funding for new buildings and extensive off site playing fields. The new sports hall, classrooms and sixth form accommodation are benefiting students but the main building provides a poor learning environment. Despite these shabby older buildings, students and staff remain focussed on the core purpose of learning. Leadership and management of the school are good. The senior leadership team and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well, have tackled unsatisfactory teaching and are clear about what still needs to be done. They have overcome considerable difficulties with staffing, particularly in science. With recent appointments and the effective redistribution of responsibilities in the senior team the school's capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are adequate. Students attain lower than average standards. The strong leadership of the headteacher has ensured that, overall students' achievement is satisfactory, despite the fact that the range of courses offered at present does not fully meet their needs. A very limited number of vocational courses are provided. A few students take advantage of the courses offered at two other local Lambeth schools but this is at an early stage of development. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. At present there is insufficiently robust monitoring and

tracking of students' progress in the sixth form, so early intervention has not always been possible. Nevertheless, a number of students do succeed and obtain university places each year.

Until completion of the new sixth form suite in September 2006, the accommodation for the sixth form was poor and partly explains the moderate staying on rates from Year 11. A number of students do not complete a full two year sixth form course. However, students reported very positively about their experiences in the sixth form and were pleased to have chosen to stay in the school to further their studies. In view of recent improvements and the effective leadership of the headteacher, there is good capacity to make the necessary improvements the sixth form.

What the school should do to improve further

* Provide a greater range of courses to meet the needs of all sixth form students to ensure a more viable sixth form.* Raise standards in the sixth form and improve students' achievement by closer attention to the tracking and monitoring of their progress.* Address the issues of health and safety raised during the inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students enter the school with standards that are generally a little above the national average. In the first three years in the school (Years 7, 8 and 9) students make good progress and results achieved in tests at the end of Year 9 are higher than the national average in English, mathematics and science. Overall, standards are above average and have been rising over the last three years. Achievement is good. At the end of Year 11, standards reached at GCSE are well above the national average in a number of subjects, significantly so in art and design, English, information technology and physical education. The recently introduced courses of GNVQ business studies, BTEC physical education and applied ICT all achieved good results in 2006. The number of students achieving 5 or more A* - C grade GCSE passes has increased steadily over the last three years and in 2006 was well above the national average at 80%.The proportion of students achieving 5 or more A* - C grades including English and mathematics is also well above average at 61% in 2006. Progress made by students is good from Year 10 to Year 11. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress because of the careful support that they are given and students from minority ethnic backgrounds make significantly good progress. Standards reached in both GCE Advanced Supplementary and GCE A2 Level (full GCE Advanced Level) in 2006 were lower than the national average, however students make satisfactory progress in the sixth form. Few students gain higher grade passes at A2 Level, a much lower proportion than that found nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The students' personal development and well being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are good and students commented that the school has a real sense of community. Students have positive attitudes to their studies and work with enthusiasm in class. Behaviour in lessons is good, but satisfactory around the building when students are not closely supervised. Students commented that bullying is rare and, when it occurs, it is dealt with effectively. Attendance is above average and the number of exclusions is low. Students play an active role in the life of the school. The school council meets regularly and students say they are listened to and gave examples of instances where the school had acted upon their suggestions. Students make a positive contribution to the life of the community. For example, older students support younger students through activities such as the well-organised mentoring programme. Students commented that they appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities particularly those on offer through the specialist Sports College. Physical activity and education for healthy lifestyles are important priorities and students respond well to the wide range of physical activities available. They are given very good opportunities to develop the skills needed in the work place through a range of experiences in personal, social citizenship and the school's strong links with the local business community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The focus that has been given to improving the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection has paid off well. Teaching and learning are now good overall. Most teachers are good subject specialists who plan lessons well with clear learning objectives and a good range of activities to engage all students. Students with learning difficulties are well supported by the new learning support team. Students' good attitudes to work, good behaviour in class and very positive relationships with their teachers are key factors in their effective learning and good progress. Students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported.

Most students readily engage in class discussion and the best teaching builds on this confidence in speaking and listening. Students respond impressively where high expectations are set. They enjoy being challenged to fulfil their potential through highly effective questioning and feedback from their teachers. They are very clear about how to improve and actively evaluate their own and other students' work. Although good overall, there is still some variability in the quality of teaching and,

marking particularly, needs to give more information to students about how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 4

In the main school, a good curriculum is provided which is broad, balanced and flexible and responsive to students' needs. Some vocational courses are provided in Years 10 and 11 and the school is actively seeking to develop this aspect of its provision further. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities have good access to the curriculum and their needs are met well. The school provides good enrichment activities for gifted and talented students, for example, through a link with the University of London. Good opportunities are provided for Year 10 students to take part in work experience. The personal, social, citizenship and health education programme helps students' understanding of citizenship and helps prepare them for life after school.

The curriculum in the 6th Form is inadequate. The range of courses is limited and not fully matched to all potential students' needs. The school is at present actively exploring the possibilities of improving its 14-19 curriculum provision. The school is developing some links through the North Lambeth Sixth Form Partnership (NL6).

There is a wide range of high quality extra-curricular activities, including a vibrant range of modern water sports of which the school can justifiably be proud. Other sporting activities, such as the regular skiing trips, support students' learning very well. Students in Years 10 and 11 also have very good opportunities to take part in business related activities with one group winning an award from the London Challenge.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 4

This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory overall. Individual students' needs are dealt with very effectively by the pastoral and special needs team. They have strong links with a number of outside agencies and provide very good support to those students who have particular difficulties or who might be at risk of underachieving. For example, a well-organised mentoring programme is in place which has a positive effect on improving students' GCSE grades. Older students are trained to act as peer mentors. Both learners and mentors commented very positively about this process. Students receive satisfactory guidance and advice on courses and career choices in the main school but there are weaknesses in guidance in the sixth form.

Arrangements for safeguarding all students are good in many respects. The school has very thorough measures in place to ensure students attend regularly and on time. Students' progress in the main school is being monitored regularly and targets set. During discussions students explained what their targets are and how they have received guidance on how they can be achieved. Students are being given a strong

voice through the school council and expressed confidence that measures taken against any instances of bullying are effective. However, a number of health and safety issues relating to the building, require attention.

The school has been very successful at promoting students' health. Students value the personal, social, citizenship and health education programme which covers a wide range of topics including sex and drugs education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are good overall but less effective in the sixth form. The school's distinctive character of nautical tradition has been effectively built upon by the headteacher, through his vision for the school as a Sports College. This has a positive impact on students' motivation and self esteem. The headteacher and governors have worked tirelessly to improve the facilities of the school; very recently opening the new sixth form centre, sports hall, music and mathematics accommodation. However, the old building remains shabby and a number of unattractive classrooms result in a poor learning environment.

Improvements in the curriculum in Key Stage 4 and in securing a more stable staff have led to major improvements in students standards over the last three years. New roles and responsibilities for senior staff more appropriately support further curriculum change, teaching and learning, and special educational needs. Communication between senior and middle managers has improved since the last inspection but the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not as consistent across all departments as it could be. The school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and is actively seeking to improve sixth form provision. Governors have a good knowledge of the school, use their skills and expertise well and provide good support and challenge for the headteacher.

There have been considerable difficulties with staff recruitment and retention in some areas of the curriculum but this is now largely resolved. There are significant indications that new staff have settled in well and are working effectively to raise standards still further in the main school and in the sixth form.

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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The behaviour of learners	3	2
The attendance of learners	2	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
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?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	4

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you for the polite and very helpful way you welcomed us. We enjoyed discussing with you the work you were doing and looking at the progress you were making in school. You talked enthusiastically about your school and we hope you will take the time with your parents to read the full report. We thought you might like a summary of the inspection findings.

The majority of lessons were good and we were pleased with the way that most of you work hard in lessons, achieving considerable success. You behave well in lessons and you and your parents tell us that you enjoy coming to school, which we think is shown by your good attendance. You take pride in the responsibilities that you have been given, for example, the school council, and enjoy the wide range of activities that are provided outside of normal lessons. It was pleasing to see the sixth form students taking an active part in supporting younger students.

The school's success at achieving sports status has provided you with additional facilities to do well, particularly in water sports and is an area of excellence. We hope that you will continue to take advantage of these excellent opportunities.

We were concerned about the range of courses offered to the sixth form, which attracts fewer students back after Year 11 than would be expected. Although many of you achieve success, we feel that this could be improved if teachers monitored your progress more closely and ensured that you did not fall behind in your studies. The sixth form would be significantly improved if a greater range of courses were offered, particularly vocational ones. We have asked your teachers to look at this urgently in order to boost the number of students in the sixth form and to make full use of the excellent new facilities provided. The older building requires improvement and there are a few areas in need of urgent repair.

We wish you all success for your studies in the future.

Yours sincerely Jennifer Smith HMI