



The Compton School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101352
Local Authority Barnet
Inspection number 286041
Inspection date 11 September 2006
Reporting inspector Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Summers Lane
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	11–16		N12 0QG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02083681783
Number on roll (school)	851	Fax number	02083682097
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	
		Headteacher	Mrs Teresa Tunnadine
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–16	11 September 2006	286041

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. She studied the school's self-evaluation form and other data and observed five parts of lessons. She had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors, met groups of pupils, and had discussions with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, middle managers, and a headteacher of a local primary school. Shortly before the inspection a questionnaire was sent out to parents and 331 responses were received.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average, but expanding. It is substantially over-subscribed. Just over half of its pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the percentage of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is well above average. Students come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds, some of which are significantly deprived. The percentage of pupils with learning needs or disabilities is higher than average as is the percentage with a statement of educational need. The school has technology specialist status and has been chosen to apply for a second specialism. The school has 'Leading Edge' status which demonstrates its innovative approach to education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Inspirational leadership of the headteacher, supported by a committed and extremely talented team underpins this school's exceptional success. As one parent commented, 'The Compton offers the complete package for a fantastic education...' Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds flourish in an atmosphere of high expectations and positive thinking. This is an outstanding school in which each and every pupil really does matter.

The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection. It has invested in a number of new initiatives which have enabled the standards to rise year on year to a level significantly above the national average by the end of Year 11. The achievement of pupils is exceptional because they are inspired by their teachers, and their personal, social and emotional skills are nurtured very well. They are mature young people who are rightly proud of their school, who obviously enjoy coming to school, and who always behave impeccably. The school's status as a Technology College brings huge benefits. It develops pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) talents particularly well and raises their ICT skills to a high level, thus preparing them very well for life after school.

Teaching in the school is first rate because of the attention to detail teachers pay to planning fascinating lessons. The outstanding teaching encourages pupils to work extremely hard and respond well to all they are asked to do. Pupils talk about how they are rewarded and encouraged at every level, which motivates them to want to do the very best that they can.

The headteacher and senior leadership team are a very efficient, dedicated group of people who work particularly well together. They have created a highly effective environment for learning, not only for the pupils but for everyone. Managers at all levels share the vision for the school and talk enthusiastically about their future aspirations. This is a school which is never complacent and has outstanding capacity to build on its success so far. The school's most innovative current development is the creation of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This means that pupils and their parents will soon be able to access the school's learning resources on line. It is illustrative of the school's desire to stand at the leading edge and of an unrelenting drive to be the best. Governors are committed and hard-working. They support the school very effectively. They are fully involved in the leadership of the school and at all levels of management. One of the governors interviewed commented 'The school is a superb example of what is possible with an ambitious headteacher, management and staff.'

The school is rightly making plans to improve its curriculum provision even further. It plans to introduce more vocational elements so as to increase the choice for its pupils and thus enable them to play to their strengths even more. The school judges its own performance accurately, but in some areas of its work, it is too modest in its appraisal.

What the school should do to improve further

* Increase the breadth of the curriculum in order to offer more choice of vocational subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards overall are outstanding. All indicators point to a year-on-year rise in standards. Pupils gain just above average results in English, mathematics and science in the national tests at the end of Year 9, but by the time they reach Y11 their GCSE results are impressive and significantly above average. Pupils' achievement is outstanding because they fully meet their challenging targets and the high expectations set for them.

Pupils with learning difficulties achieve very well because well trained teaching assistants offer high quality support and have good subject knowledge. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with English as an additional language also achieve very well and thrive in an atmosphere of support and challenge. The vast majority of pupils make outstanding progress whilst they are at The Compton School.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well being of pupils is outstanding as are the contributions made by learners to their school. They really enjoy coming to school, and this results in exemplary attendance and excellent achievement. Pupils have a sensitive and moral attitude to the plight of others and have organised various fund-raising activities to help the less fortunate. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Pupils' contributions to the community are excellent as demonstrated by the highly effective school council and the powerful group of 'student researchers'. These pupils have explored healthy eating and lifestyles and this work has resulted in liaison with school catering staff and the elimination of most 'fast foods'. Others delved into 'learning styles' and reported findings to a group of teachers. Another looked into how the use of ICT impacted on pupils' learning and basic skills. A very high level of basic skills, an excellent work-related learning programme, and high quality work experience placements result in young people who are more than ready for the next stage of their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The enthusiasm demonstrated by teachers is mirrored by pupils keen to do their teachers proud. Superb displays can be seen in all classrooms and the quality of teaching is extremely high. Lessons are meticulously planned and executed. All teaching is characterised by high levels of challenge and expectation, skilful questioning, very well organised paired work and lots of short, sharp, focused activities and tasks. Pupils need no encouragement to present their work to others and are happy to offer constructive criticism of each other's work. Their verbal responses in class are incredibly mature. These are significant factors in the raising of achievement. Assessment procedures are excellent and user-friendly. Pupils know exactly where they are in relation to the progress they make, and told the inspector so.

Because of a first-class training programme for teachers and teaching assistants, skills are developed and shared with others and full use is being made of new technology such as interactive white boards. As noted by one parent, 'Excellent, excellent, excellent!!! The Compton is making amazing headway in ground-breaking school systems and methodology.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum which demonstrates how keen it is to introduce new elements and keep moving ahead. In response to national expectations, the school has included some vocational courses for learners in Years 10 and 11. Although the curriculum is already outstanding, the school realises that it needs to continue to develop this vocational approach. It has planned for the introduction of more of these courses next year so that a suitable pathway is available for every pupil. Pupils are also given the opportunity to take two GCSEs early. This initiative contributes to raising achievement because of the resulting challenges presented to pupils. Work-related learning is excellent and is highly praised by pupils.

Pupils state that no-one is left out as the school is careful to include everyone in its life. For instance, there is a wide range of after school clubs, and these are popular with pupils. This results in achievement which complements the taught curriculum. There is a very strong programme of alternative provision for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties which results in improved self confidence through a sensitive individual approach.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils at The Compton contributes strongly to their excellent personal development. Much has been done to

ensure that pupils feel safe and secure whilst in school. When asked about bullying, pupils responded that it was rare and said, 'Bullying is not tolerated in school and everybody knows that!' Excellent systems are in place to resolve conflict including the provision of a behaviour coach. Robust procedures are in place for risk assessment, and to ensure safety and child protection. Care and guidance offered as 'outreach work' extends to the local school community, smoothing transfer from primary school education to The Compton and resulting in pupils who are already 'at ease' when they start their secondary school career.

The needs of individuals and groups of pupils are met very well because academic guidance is excellent and involves pupils and their parents at every level. No pupil is allowed to struggle alone.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of this highly successful school are outstanding. This judgment is echoed by the vast majority of parents who feel that the school is a place of real excellence. Superb teamwork results in a vision shared by all members of its staff. The first priority in this school is its pupils and their achievement. Central to pupil achievement is high quality teaching. Since the monitoring of teaching is so rigorous, any points for improvement are easily identified and a highly efficient programme of continuing professional development supports teachers very well. There is a well developed culture of self-evaluation and sharing of best practice and good ideas.

The headteacher's tireless outreach work has benefited many other schools both locally and nationally. Her work as 'Executive Head' has resulted in a doubling of results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in the school she has supported over the last year. As a 'mentor' school, high quality support and training has been provided on a range of leadership, management and teaching issues.

Managers at all levels work together well. All managers know their roles and responsibilities and carry them out with enthusiasm.

Improvement since the last inspection has been striking, and standards have risen as a result. Self-evaluation is robust and is carried out at all levels of leadership and management. The governors play a full part in the running of the school and are not afraid to challenge as well as support. These elements place the school in a very strong position to go from strength to strength.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

Thank you for taking part in the recent inspection of your school by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do. I found you to be mature, polite, sensible and extremely helpful.

Your school is an outstanding school and it's good to see that you are very proud of this. You enjoy attending and you achieve well because of the excellent teaching you receive. Another reason for your fantastic achievement is that you are well cared for and the staff have your personal development at heart. Your school council is highly active and really helps to improve life in school. I was particularly impressed by the work done by student researchers. You participate very well in some of the decision-making affecting your school. You make a tremendous contribution to your local community and enjoy visiting and helping younger children in local schools. This is highly commendable!

Many of you take part in extra activities organized by the school and thoroughly enjoy it. Since becoming a technology college, your school has really improved its resources and you have told us how you have benefited from this. You really enjoy using the computers and appreciate how well your teachers use their interactive white boards.

Even in an outstanding school like yours, there are things which can be done to make it even better. Your headteacher and her team are incredibly good at doing this! Your school is now working on making the curriculum even better by introducing new vocational courses. I have asked that they continue with this work.

I wish you all a successful and happy life in school.

Best wishes,

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector