

Norbury Manor Business and Enterprise College for Girls

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101824
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	286196
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Adrian Lyons HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	1049
6th form	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms C Hitchen
Headteacher	Miss C Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001
School address	Kensington Avenue Thornton Heath CR7 8BT
Telephone number	020 8679 0062
Fax number	020 8679 8007

Age group	11–18
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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

Most students come from North Croydon. They are from a variety of backgrounds, some of which are disadvantaged. A high proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with a quarter of Black Caribbean heritage and one eighth from Indian and one eighth from Pakistani backgrounds. The proportion of students for whom English is not their first language is above average. The school has a stable population and the proportion of students entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. As its title suggests, the school has specialist business and enterprise status and is a training school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Norbury Manor is an outstanding school. Students enter the school with broadly average standards but achieve extremely well to reach standards that are well above the national average by the time they leave. The high academic achievement of students is part of a much wider story of first class education. The school excels in helping students to develop as individuals. As one parent said: 'My daughter has grown in many ways.... She is confident about her work and we have lovely conversations about her day and her lessons at school. A parent's dream is to have a child who is happy at school.'

In lessons, teaching is usually at least good and the overall effect of classroom teaching, marking, monitoring of students and out of lesson support combine with the extremely positive attitudes of students to make teaching and learning excellent. The highly visible and enthusiastic staff maintain a happy and well ordered environment and make the enjoyment of their work palpable. Inspectors were impressed by the maturity of the students they saw around the school and could easily see why one parent had written, 'I feel the school pulls the best out of children.'

The headteacher has been particularly proactive in ensuring the safety of students and staff around the school. Several parents commented favourably on how the school has 'worked passionately to achieve a 'safe and secure environment.' External threats have presented real challenge, but as another parent wrote: with the headteacher's 'persistence, perseverance and sheer determination she and her team, put our fears to rest.'

The school provides a haven where everyone is valued and its different cultures are celebrated. The school recognises that it is part of the local community and does its best to be responsive to its needs. It is highly inclusive and seeks to ensure that 'failure is not an option'. Parents and students told inspectors how the school has worked with students to improve their behaviour. As one Year 11 student said: 'I used to be a bit naughty and was suspended, but the school worked really hard with me and now I am staying on to the sixth form.'

The curriculum is excellent as are the school's links with other organisations in contributing to the education, standards and care of its students. The school takes its business and enterprise role very seriously. It has developed good links with local businesses. Work related learning permeates other subjects and is helping to raise standards. The school has worked with external organisations to develop material on personal financial education which are used nationally. Motivation and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) and business have improved and other subjects are able to integrate modules of relevant work into their schemes effectively.

Central to the success of the school is the excellent leadership and management at all levels. The sustained, successful leadership of the headteacher is fundamental to ensuring that such a large organisation retains a focus on clear priorities. Professional development is pivotal to the school. Performance management is well established and the sharing of good practice and honest evaluation are highly valued. 'Training School' status plays an effective role in raising the quality of teaching throughout the school as staff act as role models. Teachers said it makes us 'raise our game'.

This is an excellent school and has continued to improve since the last inspection. However, even outstanding schools are not perfect. Whilst being overwhelmingly supportive of the school, a minority of parents raised concerns regarding behaviour. While inspectors found behaviour to be good, some students present challenging behaviour. Whilst attendance is above the

national average, despite the school's best efforts, punctuality amongst a minority of students remains a problem.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Although the sixth form does not technically exist until next September, the reality is that the school's 16 - 19 year olds receive outstanding provision. A very wide range of subjects is offered. The breadth of choice is enhanced through some courses being offered at a partner school and through the use of ICT. An accounts lesson was observed where the teacher was in a room in Anglesey but was fully able to discuss with students through a video link. The school's leadership and the head of sixth form share an excellent vision for its development as soon as facilities allow. In the meantime, retention rates, A level 100% pass rates, opportunities for personal development and care and guidance are all outstanding. Business and Enterprise status plays an important role in the sixth form with successful enterprises. All Year 12 students take a B/Tec level 2 qualification in enterprise and undertake work experience.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure even greater consistency across the school in the quality of teaching, behaviour and punctuality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Inspection evidence supports the school's view that achievement and standards are outstanding. Attainment for Year 9 students has remained consistently above the national average in each core subject over the past three years, with every indication of at least maintaining this position. At GCSE the proportion of students gaining 5 passes at grades A*-C is very high. The comparison with the national average is particularly positive for 5 A*-C passes including English and mathematics.

Students enter the school with standards that are broadly average. They make excellent progress and this is reflected in the results in national tests and examinations. High standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT ensure that students are extremely well prepared for employment or further study. The school's rigorous assessment procedures ensure that all groups, including the most able and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, progress extremely well. Standards in the sixth form are good overall and are outstanding in many instances. Given lower than average starting points overall, the achievement of sixth form students is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The vast majority enjoy their lessons, demonstrate respect for each other and have very positive attitudes to learning. The personal and social education programme, citizenship curriculum, religious education and assemblies are extremely effective in helping students to explore spiritual and moral themes

such as social harmony and diversity in religious experience. Consequently students show great respect for others and the school community is harmonious and inclusive.

Students respond well to the encouragement they are given to adopt healthy life styles. This is reflected in the move that students have recently made in approaching the catering team with positive suggestions for healthy meals.

Students' involvement in the extensive extra curricular programme is very good. Many of them are active in school activities such as the school choirs. They play a very energetic role in the school community. The well organised 'student voice' plays a very effective role in raising and resolving issues. As one student said 'our views count'. Many students become mentors for learners lower down the school and help out in a large number of school and community events. They develop admirable personal qualities that enable them to make an effective contribution to the wider community, for example through the 'Norbury Changers'.

Students have a strong awareness of economic issues and regularly participate in initiatives such as social enterprise days. All subjects include learning about business and enterprise which contribute very well to the students' economic well being. The very good careers information and guidance they receive helps them make well informed choices about curriculum pathways.

This very positive picture continues in the sixth form. Confident and motivated students in both years display a strong commitment to the school and play an active role in school activities. The majority continue on to higher education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Students have excellent relationships with their teachers. They show a high level of enjoyment and interest in their work, often taking a leading part in lessons. They have a good understanding of the level they are working at, how well they are achieving at present and what it is they need to do in order to improve.

Teachers typically show enthusiasm for their subjects and plan their lessons well with appropriate and varied activities. They have very high expectations of the students and set them realistic, but challenging targets. Lessons have good pace, with tasks differentiated well for the needs of each learner. Teachers ask well-chosen questions to help students deepen their understanding. Marking is carried out regularly to inform the students how they can improve their work. In most lessons teachers check throughout the lesson the extent to which every student meets the learning objectives. In an outstanding mathematics lesson students were fully involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers. One student said, 'I like explaining things to the rest of the class'. The same high quality of teaching and learning occurs in the sixth form.

The school is constantly striving to maximise learning. Teachers are encouraged to be self-reflective and critical of their own teaching. Staff and students are both involved in the monitoring and assessing of teaching and learning. This is clearly raising achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and offers a wide range of courses and extra-curricular opportunities enabling the needs of students of all abilities and groups to be met. Girls interviewed expressed clear satisfaction and enjoyment of the curriculum they experience. In Years 7-9, fifteen subjects are studied with reduced-size groups for practical subjects. National tests normally taken in Year 9 are now taken in Year 8. This allows a flexible Year 9 curriculum with the emphasis on developing further independent learning skills including a business and enterprise emphasis in most subjects. The Year 10-11 curriculum includes vocational, academic and technical GCSEs and also has links with Croydon College for B/Tec courses. A variety of level 2 course combinations are possible. For example some higher ability students combine courses such as health and social care with triple award science. The rich extra-curriculum provision includes lunchtime and after school clubs, as well as many visits into the wider community. 'Aim Higher' students enjoy many enriching activities including visits to Oxford and Warwick University and receiving training in public speaking.

The sixth form offers a wide and growing range of subjects taught by well-qualified specialist teachers. The AS/ A2 programme is supplemented by a varied personal education programme and enterprise activities for all students, resulting in a strong record of competition success.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute strongly to students' achievements and their enjoyment at school. As one parent said: 'The pastoral support of the school is second to none and my daughters could not have done better'. Child protection procedures are very secure and regularly reviewed. Heads of year, supported by learning mentors, play a vital role in providing support for students of all groups ensuring that they make positive progress and achieve well. This high level of support is reflected in a number of positive intervention programmes that the school provides, a good example being the cooking sessions that mentors run for problem eaters. Students receive excellent guidance when making future choices.

Realistic, but challenging, targets are set for students and their progress towards them is closely monitored. Rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively and students have great confidence in the school's systems and channels of communication. As a result students feel secure in school and confident that staff will seriously address any issues that they have.

Effective steps have been taken to reduce the number of exclusions and to improve attendance. The school has carefully analysed the small level of behaviour problems to seek positive solutions. Communication with parents and the community is very good. This is reflected in the high level of responses to school issues, attendance at parents' evenings and the frequent involvement of different community groups in the school.

This very high level of care and guidance continues in the sixth form. Students are encouraged to develop independent learning skills and given excellent support and guidance when making future choices.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher offers exceptional leadership. She is passionate and proud of the school's achievements, yet still works tirelessly to find ways of maximising the potential of each student. She is very effectively supported by managers at all levels and has instilled a common purpose amongst all the staff of self-reflection and improvement. There is a strong focus on teaching and learning. The students themselves are involved in lesson observations. One student said, 'Teachers appreciate constructive criticism as they like to see things from a student's point of view'. Students are set challenging targets that are constantly reviewed. All members of staff have energetically and imaginatively addressed any underachievement, through well thought out interventions. The school's self-evaluation process has clearly identified its many strengths and areas for improvement. Areas of development identified at the school's last inspection have been very successfully addressed.

The school enjoys the overwhelming support of the vast majority of parents, who reported how pleased they were that their children were receiving a high quality education. One parent said that the school 'ensures that each girl has every opportunity she needs to fulfil her potential' and another stated that the school 'has persistently given my daughter targets based on their clearly detailed knowledge of her abilities and potential'. Governance is outstanding. Governors are highly supportive and challenge the school on a regular basis. Finances are well managed. Outside agencies and sources of funding are used very productively to enhance provision. Specialist school status has been used most effectively to provide additional opportunities that are very specific to the needs of the students and the local community.

This is a school that knows itself very well. This is also a school that constantly strives to do even better. As one teacher said, 'we are all progressing to excellence'.

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Annex A

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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
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	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	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	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

4 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Norbury Manor Business and Enterprise College for Girls, Kensington Avenue, Thornton Heath, CR7 8BT

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do.

- We believe your school is an outstanding school.
- The headteacher and the people with responsibilities make decisions with your best interests in mind.
- You enjoy coming to school and you achieve extremely well.
- The quality of teaching in your school is excellent and you are very well prepared for examinations.
- We know that you are cared for extremely well. Many of your parents told us how the school, and especially your headteacher, have worked exceptionally hard to ensure your safety in school and the nearby area.
- You behave in a very sensible and mature way around the school and in lessons.
- The vast majority of you and your parents are very happy with the school and all it offers. Many of you take part in the wide range of extra activities.
- Becoming a business and enterprise college has improved your resources and led to many opportunities for you to prepare for adult life.

To improve still further on its excellence, we have asked your school to:

- Ensure that whenever possible everybody works at the level of the best.

Your school is outstanding, but no school is perfect. There are two important areas in which you can help your school become even better. Whilst we saw really good behaviour around the school, we know that sometimes a few students do not behave well. When this happens it makes life difficult for you, the rest of your class and your teachers. Your school works really hard for you and we think you all need to support it in return. The second area you can help is in punctuality. Too many students arrive late. They miss important learning time and disrupt lessons for those who do arrive on time.

Best wishes

Adrian Lyons

Her Majesty's Inspector