

# Stoke Newington School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100279
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	307349
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Hornbrook HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1344
6th form	134
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr H Stewart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M Emmerson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Clissold Road Hackney London N16 9EY
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7241 9600
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7241 9699

---

<b>Age group</b>	11-19
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 October 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	307349

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. During a one-day visit, inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. They also investigated the following issues: the accuracy of the school's judgements about the achievement of students in Years 7 to 9, the performance of sixth form students in 2006-07 and the quality of post-16 provision, possible variations in the quality of teaching for different age groups and the impact of the school's managers on achievement and standards. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, published test and examination results, policies, minutes and other school documentation, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff and students, and parental and student questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Stoke Newington School is a large, inner-London secondary school with a diverse student population. The local area is characterised by extremes of wealth and poverty and a high incidence of violent crime. Over one third of the students are eligible for free school meals, well over half are from minority ethnic groups and nearly 40% speak English as an additional language. The number of students with learning difficulties is well above the national average. There are more boys in the school than girls. The school is a member of the north Hackney 14-19 partnership and the first cohort of sixth form students took GCE AS level examinations in 2007. The school has media arts and science specialist status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Stoke Newington is an outstanding school with a culture of high expectations. Close attention to making sure that all students do as well as they possibly can characterises the school's leadership and management at all levels; in eight successful years at the school, the headteacher has seen GCSE results rise from well below the national average to securely above it.

Staff and students value the school's positive, multicultural ethos - 'This is a true community school,' said one student - and the school is rightly proud of its specialist status and of the creative opportunities available to students. One parent wrote that Stoke Newington 'provides a dynamic environment that taps the interests of adolescents in a manner that has surprised me', while a teacher said that she was happy to be working in such 'a creative and dynamic school'. Innovation is encouraged. Teachers, co-ordinators and heads of subjects are fully involved in the strategic development of the school and feel trusted and valued. Their strong commitment to students' learning and achievement is matched by an emphasis on support for individual students, particularly if they are identified as falling behind or have particular talents. As a result, students achieve outstandingly well, are happy at school and leave very well prepared for the future. The parents of two Year 7 students wrote: 'We are very pleased at how well both children have settled into the school and are so happy at a time when it can be very stressful.'

Overall, standards continue to climb steadily. Although students who joined the school before 2006 did so with below average levels of attainment, in 2006 and 2007, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and Mathematics was above average. In 2006, the progress made by students from Year 7 to Year 11 put Stoke Newington in the top 3% of schools nationally. Students do particularly well in Years 10 and 11 where their progress is well above average. Before then, they make progress that is at least satisfactory, and in some years, good, although attainment in Year 9 remains below average. The school identified weak literacy as a contributory factor in the relatively poor performance of some groups, such as Turkish/Kurdish students; carefully targeted support has significantly improved their results. White British students make most progress, but no group significantly underperformed in 2006; those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make progress that is significantly above average.

Students enjoy their learning and rate their school very highly. Behaviour in classrooms and circulation areas is good and isolated instances of bullying are effectively dealt with. Students' spiritual, moral and social development is good and reflected in their courteous behaviour and the respect they show for all members of the school community. Their exposure to different cultures is wide and highly valued and they participate in a large number of creative activities; as a result, their cultural development is outstanding. Students understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, speak positively about the choices of food available and regard the number of sports and physical activities available as a strength of the school. Attendance is slightly above the national average, but the school recognises that the level of unauthorised absence is too high. Good standards of basic skills, high quality work experience and excellent links between the school and local industry ensure that students are very well prepared for work or further education or training. By the time they leave the school, students have become confident, mature and articulate citizens.

The school's success in creating an innovative and flexible curriculum is outstanding. Carefully structured pathways in Years 10 and 11 allow students to maximise their choice of GCSE subjects,

while a strong vocational offer means that some 60% of them are able to integrate vocational options into their programmes. All students in Years 10 and 12 have work experience, often in the creative or media industries. Every effort is made to accommodate students' preferences. For example, some follow horticultural courses at a local agricultural college while a small number of students with low academic achievement support their level 2 studies with skills certification. All students follow a life skills programme. Students value highly the extensive programme of extension activities as well as the many opportunities they have to support their studies; every GCSE subject has an optional study support class.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school at all levels are outstanding. Teachers know their pupils very well and use a well-developed target setting process to monitor and review their progress and to encourage them to work their hardest. Parents appreciate the feedback they receive and the way they are kept informed about their children's progress. The quality of pastoral care is high and child protection procedures are secure and well understood. Efforts to combat bullying have been exhaustive. A parent particularly praised the work of the anti-bullying team and reported that this was 'an area in which the school excels'.

Teaching is good and highly regarded by students and their parents. One parent wrote, 'I never cease to be impressed by the energy and dedication of the teachers who mostly have the pupils' respect because they have earned it.' Teachers plan thoroughly and manage their lessons extremely effectively; there is no significant variation in the quality of teaching for different age groups. However, the school acknowledges that they do not always target the full range of ability in their lessons and that the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom has yet to be realised.

Management processes run very smoothly and the school's review and evaluation of its performance are very thorough. The quality of data produced by the school is very high, enabling staff and governors to pinpoint areas of under-performance, such as that in Years 7 to 9, with great accuracy and to take brisk and effective action. Over recent years, highly effective management has had a significant impact on achievement and standards; the school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form was established as part of the local authority's strategy for post-16 education in Hackney and after wide consultation within the school community. It offers a good programme of GCE A and AS levels and students are able to extend their choice of subjects in partner schools because the partnership has adopted a common timetable. Sixty students took GCE AS levels in 2007; preliminary results from the school suggest that attainment in this first year was below the national expectation. The school acknowledges that too many students with borderline capability were enrolled in 2006 and believes that this is the reason for their below average performance. More stringent entry conditions are now in place. The same rigour of self-evaluation applies to the sixth form as to the main school and both operational and strategic management are effective.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in the sixth form.
- Lower the rate of unauthorised absence.
- Ensure teachers offer suitable challenges for the full range of ability in their lessons and make better use of classroom ICT resources to engage students in learning.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	3
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?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
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?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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

31 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Stoke Newington School, London, N16 9EY

I am writing to let you know the judgements made about your school. We very much enjoyed meeting some of you, talking to your teachers and visiting lessons. Your views are very important and helped us to understand your school. In the end we thought that Stoke Newington is providing you with an outstanding education. We were particularly impressed with:

- the facilities and resources you have and the opportunities to take part in all sorts of different activities
- the way you value and celebrate the multicultural life of the school
- the way that your teachers are really supportive and always encouraging you to do as well as you can
- the school's links with businesses, particularly in the creative and media world
- your examination results in Year 11 - you do very well at GCSE
- the imaginative and creative way your teachers plan the curriculum
- the excellent leadership of the school by your headteacher and the quality of school management at all levels.

To make it even better we think that your teachers need to make sure that all of you are equally challenged in lessons and that you do better in the sixth form. We also think that all of you should resist the temptation to stay away from school without permission.

Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work and your life in school. We were both very impressed by your mature and reflective views.

David Hornbrook

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools