

Northgate School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133749
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	316214
Inspection date	11 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	13–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	12
6th form	7
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs A Demetriades (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Edgware Community Hospital Burnt Oak Broadway Edgware HA8 0AD
Telephone number	020 8732 6309
Fax number	020 8732 6649

Age group	13-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Northgate School is situated in the grounds of Edgware Community Hospital in north-west London. All students are patients in one of two psychiatric units. One is a secure unit where many of the students are sectioned under the Mental Health Act 1983 for assessment and short-term treatment before being discharged into the community. The other is a medium stay unit where students receive longer term therapy and may remain for up to a year. Students come from a very wide catchment area including nine Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and can be referred from any part of the country. Students have, or are suspected to have, a mental illness and may include a wide range of personality disorders ranging from depression to psychotic episodes and paranoid schizophrenia. Students are mainly white British, of average ability, and there are three times as many girls as boys. Seven of the current twelve students are of sixth form age and three are in the care of a local authority. The school has achieved the Healthy School status. The acting headteacher has been in post since the beginning of this term, which, at the time of the inspection, is one week.

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 an effective school with some outstanding features. Good and relevant opportunities are provided that support individual needs enabling students to very positively re-engage with learning and achieve as well as they can. The acting headteacher has made an impressive start. She clearly demonstrates her knowledge and understanding of the work of the school and is very ably supported by the deputy, highly committed staff and a knowledgeable management committee. Team-work is a strength and the excellent working partnership with clinical staff ensures there is a very effective coordinated approach to promoting students' well-being and educational needs. A parent, reflecting the views of many, said 'The school and clinic interact very well for the benefit of the child.' Development planning is based on good self-evaluation. Challenging targets are considered to help raise standards and effectively promote high quality care and education. However, the school has accurately identified that areas for development are not prioritised clearly enough, and are not linked sufficiently to the intended impact on students' achievement.

Standards are broadly average and, given the students' starting points and their limited time at the school, achievement and progress are good. Many students achieve GCSE examinations in line with their peers while all are able to study for appropriate accreditation given their abilities. The initial assessment of students' educational and personal needs is thorough and lays the foundation for appropriate and challenging target setting. Students' achievement is the result of good teaching and the excellent care, guidance and support they receive for their individual needs. Assessment procedures are good. The tracking of students' progress is developing well and students are clear about what they have to do to improve. However, students are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own progress in lessons, although the school plans to address this issue. One parent said, 'Our son is very positive about his studies and feels that he can pass his GCSEs, whereas before he was talking about giving up.'

Relationships are excellent and mutual respect is clearly evident between staff and students. Many students begin to realise the importance of their educational opportunities and become increasingly able to take responsibility for their own learning, behaviour and regular attendance. Students' personal development is good as are their attitudes to learning. They appreciate that all is being done to support their needs and to help them succeed. Students understand the importance of keeping safe and leading a healthy lifestyle, although some suffer from associated medical difficulties and receive appropriate clinical and educational support to overcome them. Students get on very well with each other and are sensitive to each other's moods and feelings. The curriculum is relevant to the needs and interests of the students and ensures that it effectively prepares them for reintegration, further education or the world of work. A parent remarked, 'I feel our daughter is making good progress and she enjoys her school work.'

The multi-agency management committee effectively fulfils its monitoring and support role and, along with the local authority and medical staff, ensures the strategic management of the school. The school clearly demonstrates it has a good capacity to improve its provision and help raise students' achievements still further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students have their personal, medical and academic needs effectively met by carefully constructed programmes of co-ordinated therapeutic support and education. Medical and educational staff work effectively together to help students make the best of their opportunities and prepare them as far as possible to successfully participate in the next stage of their life. Students gain confidence and self-esteem through their successes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop strategies for assessment in lessons that fully involve students in their own learning and evaluation of their progress.
- Ensure that areas for development are prioritised and improvement strategies are clearly linked to raising student achievement and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are broadly average for most students at the end of Year 11. This year, students achieved well in a range of GCSE level courses and the school ensures that learners' efforts and achievement are celebrated at every opportunity within the school community. Reintegration programmes into mainstream are carefully planned and co-ordinated support and encouragement enables many students to positively re-engage with learning and achieve success. Considering their previous difficulties, their progress and achievement are good in relation to their starting points. Students who are looked after by the local authority make progress in line with other students. Thorough assessment procedures on admission lead to agreed individual targets, and an effective therapeutic, learning and support programme is implemented. Targets are regularly reviewed and students make good progress towards their agreed goals.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Students confidently report that they feel safe and secure in school and are happy they can confide in adults if they have any worries. They are treated with respect and their views are listened to. Attitudes to learning are good and as one student put it, 'I used to hate school, but I like it now and I like working.' A parent wrote to say, 'My son's confidence has definitely increased because he has been given a chance to reach his full potential.' Attendance is good overall when considering students' medical, assessment and therapeutic interventions while at the clinic. Some students still need encouragement to take up all available opportunities to continue their studies. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and effectively supported through the curriculum and in the everyday interactions between students and adults. Behaviour is good and students learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. Students have a clear sense of their own community and take part in community and enterprise projects. They gain confidence and learn useful skills that help prepare them well for possible reintegration, further study or for when they start work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good resulting in students making good progress. Individual learning programmes ensure students' different needs are fully met and staff work hard at ensuring there is appropriate progression in their learning. Teachers are skilled in adapting learning to take into consideration group dynamics and students' attitudes. A parent said, 'The staff are very supportive and they pick up on my son's good points and work with them.' Excellent relationships between staff and students ensure there is a very positive learning environment. This encourages students' re-engagement with learning and their aspirations to make progress. Ongoing feedback and support in lessons makes it clear to students how they might improve and the school is in the process of further developing its assessment strategies to increase students' involvement in their own learning. Effective teamwork between teachers and assistants ensure all students get the best out of their learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good. It is relevant to the different age groups and effectively contributes towards an individual and personalised learning programme. Whenever possible it clearly focuses on preparing students for reintegration, and opportunities for them to follow their chosen subjects. Core subjects are emphasised, alongside practical and creative subjects that encourage and motivate students' interest. A student said 'I love music and especially the rock band sessions.' The school is aware of the need to increase the art and drama learning opportunities to support the therapeutic opportunities already available within the clinic. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is well established and good use is made of visiting speakers and trips out into the community. Accreditation is available from GCSEs to entry-level certificates and on-line assessment and accreditation in adult literacy and numeracy. The curriculum aims to help students stay safe and encourage healthy living, which it successfully does. Students participate in work-related projects and residential field trips that successfully support their personal development and where they learn skills that aid their move into further education or the world of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The care, guidance and support of students are outstanding and clearly understood procedures and practices keep students safe and secure while encouraging their independence. The excellent teamwork between staff, together with the effective working partnership with clinical staff and external support agencies, ensures that there are consistent approaches and effective support for all students. Students and parents know that all staff have the students' interests at heart so they can make the best of their learning and personal development opportunities. One parent wrote, 'My daughter has made very positive changes and appears to enjoy school.'

With support and advice from the staff she is being fully guided in planning her future.' Students' progress is monitored and recorded well and students are clear what they have to do to improve and make good academic and personal development. The partnership with parents is excellent. A parent wrote, 'A lot of effort has been put into helping our son to achieve his potential despite his difficulties and is resulting in a very positive educational experience.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed acting headteacher has quickly settled into the life of the school and, with the good support of the deputy, has a clear view of its strengths and areas for development. There is an established ethos and staff commitment that very effectively promotes high quality care, education and personal development for all students. This results in all students being able to achieve well. The excellent working partnership with clinical staff ensures the effective continuity of both the therapeutic and education programmes that lead to good progress and achievement. Monitoring and self-evaluation processes clearly lead to development planning and the school is aware of the need to further prioritise developments. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and performance management is now in place for all staff, with appropriate opportunities for professional development. The multi-agency management committee gives good support to management and there is good advice and support from the local authority.

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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	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
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?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
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

25 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Northgate School, Edgware, HA8 0AD

Thank you for making my visit to your school so pleasurable and a special thank you to those students who honestly and maturely told me about their work and experiences while at school and their 'rock school' music lesson, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I agree with you and your parents/carers; your school is good and effectively supports your individual needs, enabling you to make good progress with your educational and personal development. You are aware that regular attendance and punctuality is important if you are to make the best of your learning opportunities. You are also aware that you have to take responsibility for your own behaviour and attitudes if you are to make progress and become successful.

I particularly liked that:

- all staff care about your progress; they listen and treat you with respect
- relationships are excellent and you enjoy your learning
- you appreciate how to be safe and healthy and you feel secure while at school
- you are well prepared and learn useful skills that prepare you for reintegration, further education or for work and this is a result of the outstanding support and guidance you receive from the school
- the curriculum meets your individual needs and you are taught well
- your care and education is a priority and you are encouraged to achieve as well as you can
- the school works extremely well in partnership with the medical staff and other support agencies to ensure your individual needs are well met
- the school is aware of how to further improve your opportunities.

There are a few things the school knows it can improve upon, such as:

- involve you more in monitoring, assessing and recording your own progress in lessons
- ensuring that all areas for development are directly linked to raising your achievement and standards.

Once again, thank you for an interesting day and I wish you every future success.

Yours sincerely

Mike Smith

Lead Inspector