

# Noadswood School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	116415
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326389
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1074
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Christopher Blake
Headteacher	Mr Alex Bernard
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 January 2006
School address	North Road Dibden Purlieu Southampton SO45 4ZF
Telephone number	023 8084 0025
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 42 lessons, including those visited during three learning walks around the school, and held meetings with governors, groups of students, and members of staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents relating to student's progress and standards, student's work and parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effective school actions have been, particularly in English, at improving academic standards and student's progress, including that of students who are gifted and talented, and of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- how well teachers use assessment information to plan appropriately challenging work for all students
- the extent to which changes to the curriculum have addressed students' apparent concerns about homework, and whether they get clear guidance on how to improve their work
- how effective leaders and managers are, at all levels, on driving improvements, particularly regarding the outcomes for students.

## Information about the school

In this larger than average secondary school, the proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, or for whom English is an additional language, is well below the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The majority of these have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There is an on-site unit for students with physical disabilities. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully applied for specialist status as a Sports College and an Information and Communication Technology College. It also has Enhanced Healthy School status.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

### Main findings

Noadswood provides a good education for its students. It has aspects that are outstanding, including the students' contribution to the community and the school's use of an extremely wide range of external partnerships that benefit students. It is no accident that these excellent aspects are related to the impact of the school's sports specialism. Under the good leadership of the headteacher and the specialist manager, this aspect of the school has thrived. Students have responded positively to the opportunities to participate in sport, and to act as coaches and sports leaders in various schools in the locality. As one parent wrote, 'The last four years have been entirely positive. Outside of lessons he attends numerous meaningful clubs.'

Teaching is good, and the students achieve well, particularly in mathematics and science. Relationships in lessons are positive and students want to answer questions. Their progress slows in a few lessons when teachers do not use assessment information sufficiently to plan work that challenges all students. Regular assessment allows staff to track effectively the progress made by students, and good assessment practice in physical education is being shared with other schools. There are good examples of effective intervention work and support for students that enable them to make good progress. Progress managers oversee their year groups, and regularly visit classrooms to support and track the progress of any student causing concern. Subjects make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage and motivate students.

The curriculum has been improved, is good, and allows students to access vocational and academic courses, as well as the core and specialist subjects. The school's provision for care, guidance and support is excellent, and this is supported by those parents who returned questionnaires. There were some concerns about the quality of home/school links, with one parent summing this up: 'The school needs to work on its communication with parents. Whilst the ideas are sound, the delivery needs work.' The school acknowledges this and is working, for example, on establishing a parent forum.

Since the last inspection the school has made good progress, particularly in improving standards in English. The quality and challenge of teachers' questioning have improved. The relatively new management structure has empowered subject and pastoral leaders, and encourages them to be innovative in their aim to raise standards. Challenging targets have been exceeded, and taken together these

aspects indicate a good capacity to improve. The school has forged valuable links with a school in South Africa, but there is a need for a more focused assessment of how effective its work is in encouraging community cohesion at both this and the national level.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop teaching so that a greater proportion of students improve on their progress, by ensuring that:
  - teachers make more consistent use of the available assessment data to plan challenging work for different groups of students
  - parents have sufficient information to allow them to engage in and support their children's learning.
- Improve strategies to promote community cohesion, and evaluate in more detail the impact of the school's work on national and international links.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Students' achievement is good. Standards on entry vary year-on-year, from average to above average. Due to the students' positive attitudes to learning and some effective teaching, the majority make good progress whatever their starting points. Students are generally keen to do well, answer questions and work hard. In lessons, the majority show an interest and enthusiasm for their learning. In a few lessons, however, their progress slows because the learning tasks are not sufficiently adapted to challenge students' varying ability levels. Students learned well and gained good standards in a Year 7 mathematics lesson. They were motivated by the good practical task of creating a cube in order to understand volume. After completing the challenge, one student said, 'I get it now.' In a Year 9 science lesson, the students achieved well because the investigation was again practical, but also highly relevant. Along with the highly effective use of information technology, the students gained a good understanding of how swine flu spreads through DNA and cells.

The numbers of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is above average. Standards in mathematics have been consistently above or well above average. Staffing issues, which have now been addressed, have contributed in the past to below average standards in English. GCSE exam results in 2008, and current data, show that students now achieve well and are attaining standards in line with mathematics. There are further improvements to standards in the specialist subjects of physical education and ICT, with the majority of students set to attain above average standards at A\* to C levels. In science, the percentage of students achieving at least two A\* to C grades at GCSE in 2008 is significantly above average. There is some variability between subjects, for example in the number of students attaining the higher grades at GCSE in 2008 in business studies and art.

Good, positive relationships exist, and students say they enjoy their education. Consequently, all groups of students – including those who are vulnerable, those with gifts and talents, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities – make good progress. Students say they feel safe, although some parents had concerns over bullying. Inspectors found that behaviour is mostly good, and most students are confident that the rare cases of bullying are addressed promptly. The students' maturity is demonstrated most effectively in the way that students from the physically disabled unit are welcomed and fully included in activities. A healthy respect is shown for each other and to adults. Students have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, reflecting the effect of the Sports College status and the Healthy School Award. Students make an excellent contribution to the community through acting as sports leaders, and also when taking meaningful decisions in school life through their membership of the very good range of student groups such as the Ethos and Eco groups. They have also contributed to local community projects in ways such as doing charity work, participating in an art festival and helping in a day centre.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

The overall quality of teaching is good. At its most effective, teachers use their very secure subject knowledge to pose questions that challenge students of all abilities. Innovative and varied activities are introduced so as to motivate students and address the different ways that they learn. In history the students have shown good levels of motivation when making 'Films for Learning' about the Crusades, while in science, rockets have been the focus. Good practical activities enhanced well the enjoyment and learning of a Year 7 class investigating density. There exist some inconsistencies. In some lessons, the progress of students slows. This is because

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

insufficient attention is paid to the use of prior assessment information to design learning activities that challenge students of different abilities, such as the higher attainers. Teachers use ICT well to add pace to lessons and to make clear the learning objectives for the lesson. Good feedback is given to students after teachers mark the regular, end-of-unit assessment. Consequently, students know the levels at which they are working, and most, but not all, know how to improve their work. Inconsistencies also exist in the extent to which teachers encourage students to reflect on their learning and allow self-evaluation. While students spoke of regular homework, some parents expressed a need for more of it to be more consistently challenging. In lessons observed, the homework was relevant and appropriate.

A new curriculum is being trialled and is good. For some time, students have had individual programmes of study where necessary. However, the new arrangements offer students three distinct pathways, which clearly recognise their particular academic or vocational aptitudes. There are more, good opportunities for student's progress to be accelerated. In mathematics and English, for example, there is early GCSE entry, with the possibility of successful students making further option choices in Years 9, 10 and 11. There is room for the development of a wider range of vocational courses for those students in the more vocational band pathway. In 'Learning to Learn' lessons in Years 7 and 8, a range of valuable study skills are taught, giving younger students more confidence and independence. The curriculum is fully accessible to physically disabled students. The impact of the sports specialist status is illustrated in basketball lessons, where able-bodied students and those with physical disabilities play alongside each other, all using adapted wheelchairs. Students' social, personal, and emotional needs are well met. Large numbers of students access the wide range of extra-curricular activities and enjoy visits, both home and abroad. They are well prepared for their future lives. This is because of their good basic skill levels, particularly in ICT, but also as a consequence of the curriculum provision for careers advice, enterprise activities, citizenship, work experience, and health education.

The provision for care, guidance and support is excellent, and undoubtedly contributes to the students' good personal development. Risk assessments and other health and safety documentation are in place and are regularly reviewed by governors. The specialist provision for physically disabled students is outstanding, and the help that they receive enables them to access their learning and make progress. Good interventions result in students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities making good and sometimes better progress towards their personal targets. The recent introduction of non-teaching guidance managers has contributed very well to the care and support for students. As a result of their work, the exclusion rate has dropped by 66% and attendance has improved.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has worked effectively and successfully to establish among managers and staff a shared vision, based around improving the outcomes for students. Under his guidance the sports and ICT specialisms have flourished, and this effectively underpins the life of the school. A suitable monitoring and evaluation cycle is in place that results in appropriate development planning – for example, the need, now fulfilled, for a new curriculum. Also, some positive initiatives to engage with parents have taken place, for example the use of texting and emails. However, there is still more to do to provide parents and carers with early and sufficient information about their children’s pastoral and academic standing, and how they can support their children’s learning. In some subject areas there is insufficient attention to establishing success criteria against which progress can be measured. There is a good emphasis on the professional development of staff, and their expertise is being well used. For example, the ‘Innovation’ team is currently looking at how to further engage students in learning and to raise their awareness of progress. Consequently, in science, a trial of online assessment, emailed to parents, is taking place. Leadership has brought about a cohesive and inclusive community. The governing body supports the school well through their monitoring, and does provide challenge over issues such as the imminent move to a new arrangement for tutor groups. The governors have devised an effective score card that allows for a good ongoing review of the school’s performance, including aspects such as student behaviour.

There is an extremely impressive range of partners in the community, who are well used to benefit learners. Over 80 employers help with mock interviews for students, and a very wide range of specialist health, care and social agencies are accessed on behalf of all students, including the physically disabled. There are very widespread sporting contacts with other schools, individuals and clubs. The school also plays a leading role in the local 14–18 and New Forest partnerships. The school acknowledges that it has some way to go in establishing the impact of its work on promoting community cohesion at the national and international levels.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3



The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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## Views of parents and carers

Fewer than a tenth of parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Of those, the majority were happy with the school. Some concerns were raised about the quality and promptness of school/home contact. This was concerning both the individual child's pastoral and academic news, and wider school information such as the changes to the curriculum and the tutor system. Parents felt their child did enjoy school, and were supportive of the quality of school leadership. A small number felt that the school did not listen to their views.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Noadswood School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 82 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 901 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	30	11	0

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



29 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Noadswood School, Southampton, SO45 4ZF

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you for the welcome you gave us. We listened carefully to what you had to tell us about your school – whether formally in group meetings, or around the school during break times. We, like you, judge that yours is a good school.

I would like to highlight some very positive aspects:

- you enjoy school and make very good use of the varied activities on offer
- the majority of you progress well as a result of your positive attitudes to work and the good teaching that you receive
- you told us, and we could see, the number of changes brought about by the sports and ICT specialist school status
- we would particularly like to stress how pleased we were to see how you all, both the able-bodied and the physically disabled, socialise so well, and contribute to your community so extremely well
- your school leaders have overseen many improvements and identified some very appropriate developments for the future of the school.

We have asked the school to ensure that all teachers plan work that will challenge you all in lessons. We have also agreed with many of your parents that communication of different types of information could be improved. The school is working to improve this.

We could see how very well the school has established such a wide range of external partners who help you, either in your personal life or in your learning. We have asked that in promoting community cohesion, it adopts a more evaluative view of the impact of its work, particularly regarding national and international links.

With best wishes for all your futures,

Yours faithfully

Michael Pye  
Lead Inspector

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