

Nightingale School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131594
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	328618
Inspection date	22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	72
Sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graham Wickham
Headteacher	Mr Richard Gadd
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
School address	Beechcroft Road Tooting London SW17 7DF
Telephone number	020 8874 9096
Fax number	020 8877 3724

Age group	11–18
Inspection date	22 January 2009
Inspection number	328618

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: 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 an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- standards and achievement
- teaching and learning
- personal development and well-being
- aspects of the curriculum
- child protection procedures
- leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, observations of teaching and the work produced by students. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with students, the chair of governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Nightingale School provides for boys who have statements of special educational need related to social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. Most students live in Wandsworth although some come from outside this area. The students at Nightingale are all vulnerable young people. The vast majority are known to the Youth Justice Board and the number of looked after children is above average. Approximately half of the pupils are White British, and half are Black British and Black or mixed Caribbean. Nearly all experience stress in their personal lives and have had an unsettled early education. The school also manages the Community Learning Team (CLT), which provides programmes for its secondary-age students who find it difficult to attend full-time schooling. The school is federated with Elsley School, a primary school meeting similar needs, and shares the same principal and governing body. Since September 2008, the school has operated a sixth form on the same site for students who attended the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Nightingale is an outstanding school where students make exceptional progress in their academic and vocational studies as well as in their personal development. Although attainment is well below average compared to mainstream schools, the students achieve outstandingly well in relation to their starting points. At the end of the last academic year, the vast majority of students left with a range of GCSE passes including English and mathematics at grades A to G and nearly one third left with good passes at grades A to C. Over 80% gained at least one Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualification and nearly half left with two or more. The school's predictions, based on accurate assessments, indicate even greater success this academic year. Students also achieve success in Adult Literacy and Numeracy awards (ALAN) which assess literacy and numeracy levels required by adults. Younger students are also making outstanding progress. This is shown in improving results in national tests and reading ages. The school has excellent tracking systems to ensure that additional literacy, numeracy and pastoral support is provided where necessary. This targeted intervention leads to improved engagement with learning and is a key factor in the students' success.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Regular monitoring and effective support by school managers are successful in ensuring that lessons provide high levels of challenge without threatening the students' belief that they can achieve. Teachers show age-appropriate respect for their pupils, pay close attention to individual needs and have high expectations of work and behaviour. Teachers make learning relevant to students' lives. For example, in an English lesson, students were asked to identify 'people we admire'. Several students made good use of the internet to research additional information about the recently inaugurated President of the United States. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and make a significant contribution to the quality of education for each individual. Instructors on vocational courses are encouraged to maximise their experience and expertise from construction and engineering trades. Lessons are available after school for additional examination support. Very good use is made of assessment, including the involvement of students in assessing how well they have done. Staff, and consequently students, benefit from good guidance about what constitutes effective marking and examination preparation.

The curriculum is much improved since the last inspection, especially the development of the vocational element. The school has retained a strong focus on literacy and numeracy for all students while expanding its provision for Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The emphasis on vocational learning and life after school eases the students' transition to working life, training and further education. The majority of local secondary schools use the school's vocational provision to mutual benefit. The school's students respond well to the presence of mainstream peers and those with severe learning difficulties. This partnership is a very good example of the school reaching out to promote community cohesion. Personal, social, health and citizenship education complements physical education programmes to ensure the students are very well aware of how to stay safe and healthy. Residential experiences and regular use of the community promote the students' understanding of healthy lifestyles and most try their best to apply this approach in their everyday lives. A good range of therapies is available for students when necessary.

The students eat healthily and sociably in the dining room despite the limited space available. They benefit from a wide range of lunchtime physical activities, including football and table tennis. Significant numbers attend breakfast club and after school activities which can run until

9pm. The school has thriving football and boxing clubs run by professional sportsmen who serve as very effective role models in terms of commitment and behaviour.

The students' behaviour is good and this, for the majority, represents outstanding progress. Most respond very well to the many systems in place to reward attendance, work and effort; expectations of work and behaviour are well understood and respected. In discussion with students it is clear they recognise the impact the school has had on their behaviour and personal development. For example, one said, 'We get treated with respect and know we always have someone to talk to if we have problems. I remember how the school used to be and it's so much improved. I would recommend anyone who needs this kind of help to come here.' It is quite common for students who have left in recent years to use the school staff as a source of advice and guidance. Although they have regular meetings with staff, there are no formal opportunities to express their opinions about whole-school matters, for example, as members of a school council. Few parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Those that did, however, indicated that they are happy with the school's influence on their children.

A minority of students pose additional and significant challenges to the school in relation to attitudes to learning, external events and consequent attendance. These students' needs are successfully addressed by the CLT. The team use a wide range of strategies to support the students back into full-time education. For example, they make visits to the students whether they be at home or, on occasions, in custody. The programmes of work provided are closely monitored by the headteacher and flexible arrangements are made so that students make a gradual progression towards successful re-engagement with education. The school is recognised as a valued source of expertise and reference by other schools and services in the management and support of students and families who are difficult to engage. The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen markedly since the last inspection. The school always seeks alternative strategies to ensure the minimum disruption to everyone's learning. All staff work tirelessly to maximise students' attendance and this is proving successful in reducing absence, although attendance remains below the national average. The students fully understand the school's systems for rewards and sanctions and the overwhelming majority show a commitment to meeting the high expectations held of them.

Leadership and management are outstanding. A key ingredient has been strong teamwork and excellent deployment of staff to guide the school towards improvement and subsequent expansion. The principal has maintained an ambitious and clear direction for the school within its federated status. The headteacher and senior managers contribute strongly to the ethos of continued improvement and seek to support the school's innovative work. The use of achievement data, led very effectively by one senior manager, is very good and she has recently identified further refinements that will provide even better information to other managers and governors about individual students' rates of progress.

Resources are well deployed. In partnership with the local authority and external agencies, much fine work exists to boost links with mainstream schools and support services. Links with parents and carers are well developed and the school is aware of the need to continue its 'extra mile' policy to maximise engagement with all. Community cohesion is a clear strength of the school.

Nightingale School enjoys the confidence of the local authority and has been identified to benefit from expansion within the authority's overall planning. The governing body provides very strong support for the work of the school. Their relevant expertise is used well within their

committee structure. The school has achieved significant improvement since the last inspection and it has an excellent capacity to improve still further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form has only been established for just over one term and seeks to develop the work of the school. There is, as yet, insufficient evidence to judge standards but students are continuing to progress at the same rate as they did in the main school. Programmes of work are highly individualised and the curriculum offers students opportunities for further vocational qualifications as well the chance to resit GCSE examinations to improve their grades. The management team are developing well and receive very effective support from the school's senior managers as they establish this innovative provision. This work is at an early stage of development and it is not yet possible to evaluate fully the impact of this new provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that senior managers and governors use data effectively to have an even better understanding of how well students are doing.
- Formalise ways of giving students a voice on all school matters.

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.

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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	3	3
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

04 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Nightingale School, London, SW17 7DF

Thank you for helping me get to know your school this week and for giving me such a warm welcome. I found that your school gives you an outstanding education.

The school has many strengths, especially in relation to how well it helps you with your learning and preparation for life after school. You receive excellent guidance for what you need at every stage of your school life and leave with qualifications that will help you, whatever you choose to do. The teaching you receive from the staff is outstanding, as is the additional support to help you improve your behaviour so that you can get on with everyone and with your school work. It is clear you become more confident as you get older. I was pleased to hear how much you enjoyed school and you told me that you feel safe and know that the staff are there to help if you have problems. You have very clear views about what you think about the school and it would be useful if you had regular meetings with the staff to share these views.

Teachers work hard to make all your lessons meet your needs. The new sixth form, work experience and improved vocational opportunities enable you to be well prepared for leaving school and going to work, training or college. A few students need a different timetable and this can help them to carry on learning even if they sometimes find school too difficult. Your behaviour is good although for a few students this remains a problem and leads to exclusions. Attendance continues to improve and I'm pleased that the vast majority of you understand that time out of school has a bad effect on the progress you can make.

The school also works hard to keep you fit and healthy. Most of you know about dangers from drugs and keep away from things that are harmful. The after school clubs serve you and your community very well.

In order to improve the school further, I am asking the principal and headteacher to make sure that staff and governors have the best possible view of how you are all doing. I'm also asking them to look at ways of listening to your views on a regular basis.

Yours faithfully

Greg Sorrell

Lead Inspector