

London Nautical School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100642
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	335571
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	David Scott

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	691
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Cox
Headteacher	Mr Hyder Dastagir
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors made 27 visits to lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans, school policies and 60 parental questionnaires. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

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

- The impact of the quality of learning in lessons on students' attainment.
- How well the school is using assessment data to secure improvement for all groups of students.
- The provision for able students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact of leaders and managers, at all levels, on driving improvements across all key stages.
- The effectiveness of steps taken to improve attendance.

Information about the school

London Nautical School is a smaller than average school situated in the heart of London. The sixth form has grown by a third since the last inspection. The school has a unique nautical ethos, is very popular and is heavily oversubscribed with four applications for every available place. It serves a very wide catchment area which stretches throughout London. The school has specialist sports status and since the previous inspection has gained a number of prestigious accolades including Healthy Schools Standard and the British Council Gold Award for International Work.

The school serves a very diverse community. Around one fifth of the students, a proportion much higher than average, has a home language other than English. Four out of ten students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, and just under two thirds of students are White British. A quarter of students, a slightly higher proportion than the national average, have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the largest group being those with specific learning difficulties. Just over a quarter of students, much higher than the national average, are eligible for free school meals.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

London Nautical School provides a satisfactory standard of education, but one that is improving under the positive leadership of the headteacher. The school has undergone recent significant changes of senior leaders and teaching staff, mainly because of retirements and restructuring. The school's priority during this period has been to re-establish a shared vision among all staff in order to raise standards and to bring about much-needed stability. This has increased the confidence of staff, parents and carers. As one parent commented, reflecting the views of the overwhelming majority, 'I have been very impressed by the commitment and application of the staff, particularly the headteacher.'

The school is a welcoming and harmonious community, where students are happy and safe and make sound academic progress. They behave appropriately, respect the views of others and have a well-developed sense of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. This was demonstrated in the discussion with students where they spoke with maturity about the various dangers to health, such as smoking, and the positive benefits of regular physical exercise. Good pastoral support and guidance, especially for the students and their families who are experiencing difficulties, make a strong contribution to the school's improving relationships with parents.

Results at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2009 showed a small improvement over 2008. Attainment is average but is not yet high enough to ensure all students are equipped to make the most of post-16 opportunities. Given students' average starting points, the 2009 results represented satisfactory progress. Despite this improving trend, the school has not yet managed to ensure more able students achieve consistently well across all subjects.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are examples of good practice, but the quality across the school is variable. This is because activities are not always closely matched to students' individual needs. Teachers do not ask sufficiently probing questions or provide specific targets to help students make consistently good progress. Sometimes teachers' explanations are over-long which reduces the opportunity for students to think for themselves and to develop and explain their ideas. When this happens, the pace of learning slows.

Despite sound teaching, a stimulating curriculum and good care and support, not all students attend regularly. The school has worked assiduously to improve attendance, which is broadly average. Nevertheless, there are families who do not observe the school holiday dates or who arrange non-urgent appointments in school time.

Information is used regularly and with increasing accuracy to identify what the school

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does well and to plan for improvement. Criteria against which to judge the impact of any changes are not always sufficiently measurable. Some leaders are new in post and the school recognises that further training and coaching will be needed to help all staff become more effective in raising standards. Since the last inspection the school has begun to raise attainment, reduced exclusions and improved sixth form provision. These demonstrate that the school has the necessary capacity to make the further improvements that are needed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and the progress students make to be consistently good by:
 - ensuring teachers use day-to-day assessments to provide activities that are challenging and are carefully matched to the varied needs of all students
 - asking probing questions in lessons which give students opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully, especially the more able students
 - reviewing targets more systematically with students so they clearly understand how to improve.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on school improvement by:
 - ensuring that tracking and monitoring information is analysed robustly by setting quantifiable measures against which to evaluate success
 - working more intensively with families to improve attendance, especially in the sixth form
 - extending the capacity of leaders and governors still further to manage their areas of responsibility through coaching and training.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average but beginning to rise, most strongly at Key Stage 4 where the successful introduction of vocational courses in information and communication technology (ICT), science and physical education led to a significant improvement in the overall GCSE results. When English and mathematics are included, the proportion gaining five A* to C grades was just below the national average. Nevertheless, the proportion of more able students attaining the higher grades at GCSE was below average in comparison to standards achieved by their peers nationally.

In lessons, the majority of students show interest and enthusiasm for their learning. For example, in a good Year 9 GCSE football lesson on 'passing and receiving' students were very well motivated and skilled at assessing each other's performance and suggesting points for improvement. However, in some lessons their progress slows because the learning tasks are not sufficiently adapted to challenge students' varying ability levels.

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The London Nautical School is a place where I send my daughter and have peace of mind. I know she is happy, safe and learning.' Inspectors agree with this comment made by a parent. Positive relationships exist, and students say they feel safe, enjoy their education and make sound progress. Behaviour generally supports learning in lessons with just some occasional boisterousness in corridors. Most students are confident that the rare cases of bullying are addressed promptly. Through the work associated with the national awards, students have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, participating enthusiastically in sporting activities and physical pursuits, which reflect well the ethos of the Sports College status. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They develop a heightened awareness of global issues and respect for people in other countries while enthusiastically seeking to help those who are less fortunate and positively embracing the nautical ideal of serving others. This was exemplified in full measure at the Remembrance Assembly where students displayed a high degree of maturity and respect during the solemn occasion. Students make a good contribution to their local community by acting as sports leaders in primary schools and through the school's partnerships with schools overseas.

Carefully matched work-experience placements ensure that students are soundly prepared for the world of work. The school has worked hard with both students and parents to emphasise the importance of good attendance. These efforts have had a fair measure of success and have succeeded in raising the students' attendance.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is improving due to more rigorous monitoring and is satisfactory with some being good or better. Relationships between staff and students are positive. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English are well supported in lessons because teaching assistants are generally well deployed. There are pockets of good practice in assessment, particularly in art, English and physical education. However, marking and teachers' explanations do not always 'sign-post' clearly how the students can improve their work.

The well-orchestrated curriculum has recently been re-organised to meet the needs and enthusiasms of all students. They experience a good range of activities. These are enriched well by visits to places of interest and significance, such as the First World War battlefields. Guest speakers, theatrical productions and clubs ranging from Lego construction to Ju-Jitsu enhance the curriculum further. At Key Stage 4, great care has been taken to ensure that there is a good blend of vocational and academic courses. This together with visits to sporting events and overseas trips to Holland, Italy and Norway provide opportunities for students to broaden their personal and academic skills. Maritime connections offer exciting and unique opportunities for students to acquire new skills through the annual regatta and weekend sailing opportunities. Senior staff acknowledge the need to strengthen the provision for vocational pathways, particularly in the sixth form.

The school is rightly proud of its good care, guidance and support. The most vulnerable students benefit greatly from good links with external agencies. Staff can point to real successes in helping students overcome difficult histories and challenging episodes in their lives. The inclusion team provides a wide range of support to enable vulnerable students to play a full part in school life and is increasingly successful at engaging hard-to-reach families. Although students' progress is regularly tracked, analysis is not always sufficiently robust to improve the progress of all.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

Despite the many changes of staff that have interrupted progress in the recent past, the determination, commitment and approachability of the headteacher to improve the school are impressive. He has a clear vision for the direction the school should be moving towards. He has established a new leadership team, with clear lines of accountability, which is focused on raising attainment. The vision has been shared effectively with all staff. Weaker teaching has been tackled well and there is a clear ambition to make sure that all lessons are good and that students achieve well. Consequently, teaching is improving and learning and progress are beginning to accelerate. A number of leaders are newly appointed to the school or are new to their responsibilities. Although 'green shoots' are beginning to emerge, for many it is still too early to assess their full impact.

The headteacher and his senior team complement each other well. They work together to guide and support staff. Self-evaluation is honest, accurate and constructive so that the school has a realistic picture of its effectiveness and where it needs to improve. Leadership roles across the school are insufficiently focused on evaluating the impact of teaching on learning against clear success criteria in order to accelerate the rate of improvement.

The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that every student has an equal chance to learn. It works hard to eradicate any differences in the achievement of groups of students. For example, the school has been very successful in helping some students with previously challenging behaviour to enjoy learning again and they now make expected progress. Similarly, the physical education department offered table tennis on the curriculum so as to enable Bangladeshi students to participate in sport.

Governors are supportive and fulfil their statutory duties. The challenge they provide has had an impact on some areas of the school's work; for example in the areas of personnel and financial management. While they receive drafts of the school's self-evaluation documents, they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's performance. The school has comprehensive and robust procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. These meet all government guidelines well. The school has evaluated its contribution to community cohesion effectively. This has been achieved by developing and promoting a clear and detailed understanding of its own community and the different faiths, ethnicities and cultures that exist within it. The school's international links promote good awareness of global issues. For example, in 2008 the school hosted high profile delegations from Zambia and Bangladesh to promote good practice in developing sports provision. Through the British Council the school has developed partnerships with schools in Malaysia.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Since the last inspection standards have risen and are now average. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Checks on the progress of current Years 12 and 13 students show that the majority are on track to meet their challenging targets. Students are particularly successful in the school's specialist sports vocational courses.

The sixth form curriculum is satisfactory and offers an appropriate range of academic and some vocational courses that meet the needs of current students well. As a result of this, just over half of Year 11 students proceed to sixth form studies. Nevertheless, the school is aware of the need to strengthen its sixth form curriculum in order to provide more appropriate vocational pathways into training and employment. Teaching is satisfactory and most students complete their courses to proceed to further education and training. Under sound leadership, the care and support of the students are good and, as a result, students' personal development is good. Attendance is broadly average which demonstrates how much all students feel they belong within the school community. Students new to the school are inducted well and nurtured so that they quickly feel at home. Girls reported that they are made to feel particularly welcome when they join the school. The school acknowledges that while students' contribution to school life and the wider community is an area for further development, an increasing number willingly takes on responsibilities and provides enthusiastic support for younger students. Students receive good feedback on their major written tasks. However, the quality of the day-to-day marking of their work varies considerably between subjects and not all students are clear how close they are to their targets.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires. Almost all respondents were very positive about the school and felt that it keeps students safe and helps them maintain a healthy lifestyle. A few parents raised concerns over behaviour, homework and communication with the school. Inspectors discussed these issues with senior staff and found there to be effective procedures in place to deal with these areas of concern. Inspectors were also shown evidence of the school's own recent surveys of parents' views and these too were wholly positive.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at London Nautical School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 678 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	44	32	54	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	37	34	58	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	22	33	56	5	8	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	29	31	53	2	3	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	17	29	31	53	3	5	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	19	39	66	4	7	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	32	38	64	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	19	34	58	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	27	37	63	1	2	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	31	31	53	3	5	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	24	33	56	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	25	32	54	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	39	31	53	2	3	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of London Nautical School, London SE1 9NA

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work and play. We valued the discussions we had with you and I would like to take this opportunity to share our findings with you.

We feel your school is satisfactory, but improving, which means that it does some things well while other things could be better. Your headteacher and teachers are totally committed to making your school a welcoming place. We were particularly impressed by your Remembrance Assembly where you conducted yourselves with distinction, displaying great respect, maturity and dignity for the formal and solemn occasion. You were a credit to yourselves and the school. You and your parents told us that you like school and that it is a caring and happy place where you feel safe. Your headteacher and teachers are determined to help you succeed and give you the best possible start in life, so we have asked them to:

- plan work that will challenge and engage you in all lessons, showing you ways to learn by yourselves, particularly for the more able amongst you
- give you clearer advice on how to improve your work so that you can achieve your very best
- make sure you all attend as well as possible, especially those of you in the sixth form. You and your family can help by not taking holidays in term time and by not scheduling non-urgent appointments during the school day.

Once again, it was very good to meet you all. We wish you and the school all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Scott

Lead Inspector

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