

# Cumberland School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102783
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	354523
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Gale

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1342
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sharon Higgins
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Bradshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 June 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 42 lessons; saw 42 teachers; held meetings with groups of students, the chair and vice-chair of governors and staff, and spoke to a selection of Year 11 parents by telephone. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's strategic plan, development plans, self-evaluation, records of lesson observations, achievement and attainment data, records of vulnerable students, and governing body minutes. The team scrutinized 313 parental questionnaires and also those of staff and students.

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

- the learning and progress of all groups of students in the school
- the quality of aspects of personal development for students particularly with regard to the level of participation of different groups of students in the school
- the quality of provision in the school and whether identified weaknesses had been overcome
- whether leaders and managers, including governors, are securing improvement at a fast-enough pace.

## Information about the school

Cumberland is an inner-city school with specialist sports and applied learning status. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2009. The school serves a diverse community. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. The main ethnic groups, other than White British, are Black or Black British-African. More than half the students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average and there is a specialist unit for students with autistic spectrum disorder. There are many students who are potentially vulnerable, for example, with long-term medical conditions, who act as carers or who are looked after. Mobility rates are very high. The school has many national awards, including Investors in People and the Inclusion Kitemark.

**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

Cumberland School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students.

Students enter the school with low prior attainment and the standards they achieve by the end of their time at the school, while improving, are still well below those found nationally.

The school provides a very high level of care, advice and guidance for groups of students and for individuals. It does this by working very closely with a range of outside agencies and adopting a flexible and responsive structure to provide for the wide range of needs in the school. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the specialist autistic provision, flourish personally and make good progress.

Students give generously of their time and talents in supporting their diverse school and local community. This contributes very well to the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness among students.

The school's thorough knowledge of the needs of its locality, and its understanding of how to meet them, underpin a clear and very successful focus on improving its community cohesion.

Students are currently making good progress again after a significant dip in progress and attainment by the cohort of students completing their GCSE examinations in 2009. Within the school cohorts there is unevenness in the progress of minority ethnic groups ranging between satisfactory and outstanding.

Teaching is satisfactory but improving. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of their students. However, there is inconsistent use of the wide range of data teachers hold to plan for the full range of needs in classes. A minority of teachers tend to talk for too long at the beginning of lessons and this reduces the pace of learning and slows progress.

Oral feedback to learners is more consistently good than the written comments in marking.

Safeguarding practice is exceptionally robust and, as a consequence, students report being very safe.

The new headteacher, the governors and other school leaders know the school well through extensive self-evaluation. They have maintained the high-quality pastoral care noted at the last inspection and stabilised the school after a disappointing set of results with a renewed focus on teaching quality. This demonstrates satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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

- Increase the proportion of students achieving five A\* to C GCSE grades including in English and mathematics and reduce the attainment gap between groups of students by:
  - focusing leaders and managers at all levels more sharply on improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility
  - raising the aspiration of some groups of students so that they make the outstanding progress achieved by their peers.
- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
  - improving teachers' use of assessment data so that all plan activities that meet the needs of the full range of learners in their classes
  - increasing the proportion of lessons that engage students quickly in their learning
  - improving the consistency and usefulness of written feedback to students.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Students enter Cumberland with low prior attainment. Good progress has been the norm for cohorts in the past, but this has still led to GCSE results which are significantly below the national average. The cohort completing their studies in 2009 made inadequate progress and this resulted in a drop in attainment. This was caused by a large influx of students with a combination of complex language and other needs into the Year 9 of that cohort. The current Year 11 is on track to make good progress and achieve higher standards; this is replicated for other year groups.

Good progress is achieved through students' positive attitudes and behaviour in class coupled to satisfactory but improving teaching, a good curriculum and outstanding guidance and support for learners. Students enjoy their learning, particularly where they are actively involved in lessons. For example, in an observed lesson one third of the students sitting down to demonstrate the impact of the Black Death on the population had a powerful effect on the class. Relationships with teaching staff are mostly excellent and an atmosphere of trust allows them to respond positively to challenges set. The school tracks students well and provides extra sessions to support them where necessary. This happens if they fall behind expectation including where satisfactory teaching fails to support good progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall. All groups, with the exception of those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, who are often targeted for alternative provision, are on track to meet or exceed their challenging targets. This is because they are well supported and their learning is personalised through nurture groups which offer opportunities specific to their needs. Progress for autistic students, both academic and personal, is excellent whether in the specialist unit or when they are integrated into the main school. The high proportion of students who speak English as an additional

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language is well catered for and they make good progress due to effective specialist support.

Students' attendance is above average and they make a very good contribution to the diverse school and wider community. The student council is involved in key decision making, for example on formulating school policies and the appointment of staff. The school offers many opportunities to develop leadership skills with prefects, sports and literacy leaders who are enthusiastically accepted by all groups. Through the sports specialism and excellent facilities there are good opportunities for students to adopt healthy lifestyles and many take them up. Students are encouraged to develop their understanding of the impact of healthier choices, risk, actions and consequences as part of their personal, social and health lessons. The school recognises the importance of developing basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and works hard to develop work-related learning. However, it acknowledges that there is still a need to develop higher standards of literacy and numeracy and to address low aspirations in regard to the students' future economic well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<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.

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## How effective is the provision?

Common good features of satisfactory teaching are subject knowledge used to convey high expectations, the range of activities and styles used and the good use of interactive whiteboards to structure lessons and engage students. Relationships are mostly excellent and therefore students generally rise to these expectations. A great deal of professional development activity has been targeted at improving teaching and the consistent use and revisiting of learning objectives demonstrates this is beginning to have an impact. However, other features of teaching are inconsistent or still being embedded. For example, in good and outstanding lessons teachers use assessment data to carefully plan for the full range of abilities in their class to accelerate learning. However, students often work on the same task regardless of their ability and this can slow their progress either because the task is too challenging or not challenging enough. Teachers provide good oral feedback to their classes. They ask questions that make students think hard, check their progress and ensure consistent engagement in lessons. Marking is of variable quality and usefulness. Usually it is consistently completed and sometimes it offers good targets for development. However, students are rarely required to act on suggestions for improvement and therefore the impact on learning is lost.

The broad Key Stage 4 curriculum meets students' needs well. It offers a wide choice of academic subjects and an increasing and flexible vocational programme based on individual need. Partnerships with other institutions enhance the offer available. The school is working hard to personalise learning. The school's dual specialisms effectively support extra options both in sport-related learning and leadership and increasingly vocational courses. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is increasingly focused on developing learning skills through a themed approach. The school has well-embedded cross-curricular ICT and the school's virtual learning environment facilitates good extra-curricular access to learning. Enrichment opportunities are varied and much enjoyed by students.

Potentially vulnerable students, including those who are looked after, spoke highly of the very good relationships they enjoy with their teachers and the high-quality care and inclusion that is at the heart of the ethos within the school. These groups are tracked assiduously for personal and academic progress and staff ensure there are excellent opportunities for them to catch up when they fall behind or miss work. A multi-agency approach to support identified students is well planned and very effective. Transitions, including effective liaison with partner schools, are carefully planned and appreciated by students and their parents. Students feel they have the right information and time for reflection when choosing options in Key Stage 4 or going on to post-compulsory education or training. This is reflected in the low number of students who do not enter employment or further education when they leave Cumberland.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

There is a clear drive from the recently appointed headteacher and his leadership team to improve all aspects of the school. The ethos of inclusion permeates the school and every member of the community is valued. Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally robust. In response to the disappointing results for the 2009 cohort an appropriate focus on professional development to improve teaching has been established. However, the work on the use of assessment information and planning for different needs is yet to be fully embedded into classroom practice. Challenging targets have been set for current cohorts and the school is now meeting and in some cases exceeding them. This has led to staff morale being high. Through effective self-evaluation systems the senior team is well aware of what it needs to improve. School and departmental development planning follows a consistent format, although there is some variation in the use of sharp success criteria to facilitate easy monitoring. Middle leaders clearly know their departments well and are aware of relative weaknesses in teaching, but are yet to fully eradicate them. Governors are rigorous in performing their statutory roles and fully involved in the strategic direction of the school. Through recent reform of the committee structure they are beginning to take a more proactive role in driving curriculum development. The school is at the heart of its community and promotes its cohesion exceptionally well. There is no evidence of discrimination and the school promotes equality of opportunity well, although there is still some unevenness in the performance of groups.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>2</b>
	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The view of parents, both through questionnaires and telephone conversations, was that most of the school's work is positive and that the school keeps their children safe. They are mostly happy with their child's experience at school, and consider that the school is led and managed effectively. A few parents felt that the school did not always deal well with poor behaviour. However, inspectors found that the school had a calm and business-like atmosphere and that behaviour management systems worked well.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cumberland 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 313 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1342 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	107	34	178	57	17	5	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	107	34	176	56	19	6	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	125	40	148	47	22	7	8	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	101	32	166	53	25	8	6	2
The teaching is good at this school	97	31	173	55	26	8	4	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	83	27	173	55	37	12	6	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	84	27	174	56	39	12	6	2
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)	97	31	161	51	23	7	9	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	70	22	182	58	42	13	6	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	102	33	145	46	43	14	11	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	19	172	55	45	14	15	5
The school is led and managed effectively	89	28	185	59	15	5	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	114	36	158	50	25	8	4	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



11 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Cumberland School, Newham, E13 8SJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when it visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and meeting with you. We were particularly impressed by the pride you take in your school and the way some of you stopped to tell us about it.

These are the main findings and strengths of your school.

- Cumberland School provides you with a satisfactory educational experience.
- We agree with the headteacher and senior team that the curriculum is good and improving and that the care, guidance and support are excellent. These combine with satisfactory teaching to help you make good progress.
- The care, guidance and support you receive keep you very safe and help you develop as well-rounded people who behave well and value their relationships with teachers and each other.
- The school community is very cohesive and promotes cohesion in its wider community very well.
- You participate in and contribute in an excellent way to the diverse school and wider community and this facilitates your outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders know the school well and how to make it better.

The inspection team and the headteacher agree that your school is satisfactory and it could be even better, and we have asked that the school's leaders ensure:

- you gain more good GCSE qualifications at the end of your time at Cumberland and that every group of students in the school attains as well as each other
- leaders focus on helping teachers deliver a higher proportion of good or better lessons for you
- teachers consistently use the data they have on you to plan engaging tasks for the different abilities in your lessons and consistently provide and ensure you act on comments made in their marking.

You can do your part to help by ensuring that you always behave well in lessons and

work hard. The team joins me in sending you our best wishes for your future studies.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Gale

Her Majesty's Inspector

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