

Norwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100624
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	285831
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Samantha Morgan-Price HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	689
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Camley
Headteacher	Mrs D Webster
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002
School address	Crown Dale London SE19 3NY
Telephone number	020 8670 9382
Fax number	020 8761 5933

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Norwood is a small girls' comprehensive located in Norwood, London. From September 2007 it will admit boys thus becoming a co-educational school. The school was awarded specialist college status in performing and visual arts in September 2005. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is also higher than average as is the percentage of pupils whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well above average, however those requiring statements is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that demonstrates a strong commitment to improve pupil achievement. One pupil commented, 'school makes me feel important as an individual'. Racial harmony is good. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well. They are keen to contribute to the life of the school. The school works hard to improve attendance but more work needs to be done. Leadership and management are good. Under the purposeful leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders the pace of improvement has quickened in the last two years. However the skills of some middle leaders to monitor and evaluate their departments' performance is under-developed.

Pupils enter the school with standards that are below average. They go on to achieve standards in Year 9 national assessments and in GCSE examinations that are below average and have been for a number of years. However, standards attained by pupils are improving. Teaching is good and as a result pupils make good progress although the use of assessment is not yet fully developed. There is insufficient challenge in some lessons for more able pupils.

The good curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils well. The acquisition of specialist status has enlarged the curriculum and extended the range of opportunities for enrichment. Pupils are well cared for and supported. They feel valued and safe within the school. Mentoring support provided for pupils is particularly effective.

There has been some good improvements since the previous inspection and the school demonstrates a sound understanding of how further improvements can be made. The upward trend in standards and achievement is a consequence of the implementation of the clear vision and direction for the school, where pupils' academic success is valued extremely highly. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the capacity of middle leaders to manage improvements within their departments.
- Make better use of pupils' performance data to accelerate achievement and raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their studies and achieve well by the age of sixteen. Pupils of a wide range of ability enter the school, including a small number who are very capable, but standards overall on entry are below average. In Year 9 national assessments and in GCSE examinations standards have been below average for a number of years, but are improving. Almost all pupils attain one or more GCSE grades. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*–C grades at GCSE in 2006, including mathematics and English, was substantially lower than the national average. In the core subjects, pupils' examination results in 2006 were highest in English and lowest in mathematics. Current achievements and standards in mathematics are significantly better than in previous years as result of more effective monitoring of individual pupils' achievements, providing support where it is needed, and good teaching. Appropriate targets are being met in Year 9 in English and mathematics and overall GCSE targets are also met.

The highest achieving subjects include dance and drama, reflecting strengths in the school's specialist performing and visual arts status. The school is working effectively in all areas, to make improvements in standards.

Pupils from almost all ethnic minority backgrounds represented in the school do equally well with particularly good progress made by white and black Caribbean girls in Year 9. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, those with Statements of special educational need and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to their peers, responding well to the support provided for them. The minority of highly capable pupils do not always achieve as well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Most pupils enjoy coming to the school however a significant minority do not attend regularly. Despite the improved procedures to monitor and improve attendance, it is still low. However, additional support is being put in place to encourage parents to be more pro-active at ensuring their children attend. Pupils are very positive about their school. They value the support they receive and feel that they are encouraged to succeed. Relationships and behaviour are good and improving. Pupils say that the school is a friendly place where bullying and racism is simply not tolerated as a result incidents of this nature are rare. Pupils' cultural and social development is a real strength; however, the provision for their spiritual awareness is less good. Cultural diversity is celebrated throughout the school, one pupil said that 'people are keen to learn from others' whilst another said 'it was nice to hear all the different languages being spoken in the playground'. These comments demonstrate the success of the school in establishing a safe and supportive environment in which every child can feel valued.

Pupils' awareness of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles is excellent; the participation rates in physical exercise are good and pupils can explain with some passion the importance of eating the correct foods. They are also taught the dangers associated with drugs and alcohol misuse. Pupils make an excellent contribution to both the school and the wider community. There is a school council which meets frequently and gives pupils the opportunity to contribute to school policy. For example, changes to the school uniform and the decision to become a co-educational school. There is an impressive range of opportunities provided by the school and pupils are keen to take them up for example the roles of peer mediator and lead learner. Pupils are also socially very aware as shown by their willingness to raise money for a range of charities including a school in Rwanda. Pupils' preparation for the world of work and financial awareness is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In the majority of lessons, when expectations are high, pupils respond positively. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Most lessons are well planned and teachers make sure that pupils fully understand the aims of the lesson. In these successful lessons, there are varied activities, good use is made of resources, the pace is fast and the pupils make progress as a result of challenging questioning by the teacher. Marking is

informative and provides pupils with the tools to improve their performance. However, this is not consistently applied in the school.

In a minority of lessons the pace is slower and less skilful questioning does not enable teachers to find out what pupils know and understand. Pupils are not encouraged to think for themselves or try to evaluate their own learning.

Allowance is not always made for differing abilities and the more able pupils are not always extended sufficiently to enable them to achieve their potential. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is satisfactory. Ineffective practice is identified and support then provided.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets the needs of pupils. The school's specialism in visual and performing arts is reflected in the expanded curriculum, especially for Years 10 and 11 where every pupil is encouraged to study an art's subject. The expansion of the vocational block in KS4 has ensured that the curriculum appeals to everyone. Technology subjects, that have been less successful in the past, are being reintroduced under the auspices of art technology. Talented pupils are encouraged to take some GCSE subjects early. Pupils benefit from opportunities to participate in a wide range of visits, themed weeks and extra-curricular activities. Booster classes held before and after school, during holidays and on Saturdays are aimed at improving examination grades. These are well attended. The curriculum is further enriched by visitors to the school such as, actors, musicians and 'artists in residence'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel that they are well supported and given help when it is needed. The learning support unit nurtures pupils who are vulnerable and in need of extra support. Support for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), which was under-developed is now rapidly improving.

A system has been developed which enables teachers to monitor the performance of individual pupils, identify those who require support and implement strategies to overcome their difficulties. Pupils are given targets which are monitored regularly by teachers, form tutors and year heads. Although a good start has been made, the use of this assessment data is not yet consistent across and within subjects. The school uses mentors from all walks of life to support pupils and this is particularly well developed in Year 11.

Heads of Year have devised attractive reward schemes to encourage attendance, punctuality and effort.

There are strong and effective links with a range of external agencies, including the Connexions partnership, which support pupils in making career choices. Pupils are regularly interviewed between Years 9 and 11 to assist them in making appropriate choices and pupils in Year 9 now enjoy an on-line programme of careers support. Procedures for safeguarding children are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher the school has taken significant actions to tackle the issues that have inhibited pupils making good progress in some subjects. There is a real sense of teamwork and commitment to realise the shared vision of ensuring all pupils reach their potential. For example; significant improvements are now evident in the achievement of pupils in mathematics. The school's accurate self-evaluation outlines what needs to be done and involves the support of staff and governors. The pace of change has improved significantly in the last two years.

Despite having developed strong systems to support pupil achievement and monitor course performance, the implementation by middle managers varies from department to department and within subjects. Some heads of department are not as effectively monitoring the performance of their departments. This has been recognised by senior leaders and measures have been put in place to support the development of some newly appointed heads.

Governors support the school well and are aware of the school's main priorities. They provide appropriate challenge regarding the school's performance. The school manages its finances well. Resources are effectively deployed and issues regarding staff shortages in some subject areas which had impacted upon pupil achievement have now been effectively resolved. Improvements to accommodation have resulted in good classrooms and specialist rooms. Resources linked to the school's specialist status have been beneficial in supporting pupils' learning in drama and performing arts. The school provides good value for money. The headteacher and her leadership team have provided a strong foundation for the school to move forward.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norwood School, London, SE19 3NY

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school and also for telling us what you thought about the school. We now know that you think the school values you; you enjoy school and work hard.

We judged the school to be good in all respects. You attain standards that despite being below average are improving. You make good progress which in the main is as a result of the good teaching and learning and effective support the school provides.

Your school is excellent in ensuring you all adopt healthy lifestyles. You also make an excellent contribution to your community through the various charity events and other activities you organise, as well as contributing to the life of the school. The headteacher leads and manages the school well and along with her senior team of teachers she has made good progress in the last year and a half. Managers have clear plans of how to bring about further improvement that will lead to better achievement for you all.

We did identify that there were two points that the school needs to pay particular attention to. We have asked the school to:

- Ensure that managers within the school check the work of their departments regularly in order that they know what actions are required to bring about further improvements.
- Make better use of information about pupil performance to improve the progress they make.

Best wishes for the future,

Samantha Morgan-Price HMILead inspector