

Newland School for Girls - A Mathematics & Computing College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118070
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	312800
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Heather Barnett HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	850
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jean Fenwick
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Martinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2004
School address	Cottingham Road Hull HU6 7RU
Telephone number	01482 343098
Fax number	01482 441416

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

Newland School for Girls is a smaller than average comprehensive school with mathematics and computing specialist status. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is similar to that nationally. Many students come from areas of high social and economic deprivation. Over 80% of students are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Newland provides a satisfactory education for its students. It has a number of good features and has shown marked improvements in results over recent years. The school's specialist status has supported it in many aspects of its development. Achievements and standards have improved, and in 2007 students achieved results at the end of each key stage broadly in line with national averages. Students' personal development is satisfactory. There are many good features such as the students' contribution to the community and their understanding of healthy lifestyles. The behaviour and attitudes of the majority of learners are good and they feel safe, happy and secure. However, behaviour is only satisfactory overall, and attendance is unsatisfactory, because of the very poor attendance and behaviour of a minority of students.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are many examples of good teaching to meet the differing needs of individuals but this is not the case in all areas and students are not always clear on what they need to do to improve further. The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. There are improving choices at Key Stage 4, but it is too early to see their full impact on students' progress. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are greatly appreciated by students. The school provides good care, guidance and support for its students and there are good links with external organisations to support the welfare and education of students.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There are some very strong features, for example, a clear focus on continuous improvement and raising achievement. Many initiatives have been put in place over recent years and their impact can be seen in the improving achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, improvements are still needed to raise standards further and to ensure all initiatives are fully embedded across the school. The school has made at least satisfactory progress since its previous inspection and is very well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in both key stages.
- Further develop and consolidate effective engagement strategies for particular groups of students to support improvements in attendance and behaviour.
- Ensure actions to address identified school priorities are effectively embedded across the whole school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are both satisfactory. Students enter the school with broadly average standards and make satisfactory progress to leave the school with results at GCSE that are broadly in line with national averages. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. GCSE results have significantly improved since the last inspection. Standards achieved in English language and double award science, were above the

national average at GCSE in 2007. The progress students make from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 shows an improving trend.

Standards reached at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2006 were less than the national average and the school recognised that improvements were needed. However, results for that year were significantly affected by students leaving the school and many others joining throughout the key stage. An improving system of tracking students' progress has been introduced by the school and national intervention strategies are also used in efforts to raise achievement. School data show Key Stage 3 results improved significantly in 2007 with the school achieving its best ever results in science and mathematics and the second highest ever in English.

Results in mathematics and information communications technology (ICT) exceeded their specialist school's targets in 2006 and 2007 and specialist school status is helping to support improving standards as it is enabling the school to utilise computer technology more effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of all groups of students are satisfactory. Students speak warmly about the school and say that they enjoy it. Most have positive attitudes. The atmosphere in classrooms is good and students are happy, confident to answer orally and keen to learn. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. In class and around school it is generally good. However, fixed-term exclusions for unacceptable conduct are quite high because a small minority of students let the side down. Attendance is below average and affects the progress that a minority of students make. Students are confident socially and relate well to each other and to adults.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand issues surrounding healthy living and their involvement in sporting activities gives them a good basis for future participation. They attend the extra activities the school provides outside lessons in large numbers and value the many opportunities they have to take responsibility. For example, acting as personal assistants to form tutors with younger students is particularly sought after and valued. Preparation for the world of work is satisfactory overall with strengths in the understanding of pathways towards careers and competence with computers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are a number of good features. Students behave well in lessons and little time is lost to behavioural issues. Many enjoy their lessons, listen to clear instructions given by their teachers and most know what they are expected to do. Students often contribute in lessons and are developing their skills for working in pairs and in groups. Teachers ensure that less able students receive good support from classroom assistants. In the best lessons teachers plan their lessons well to match students' needs, although this is inconsistent across subject areas. Planning includes a few manageable opening statements, although these, along with the main body of the plan, are sometimes written as tasks and not always expressed in terms of learning objectives and/or outcomes. Teachers are effective managers and have developed relationships that enable students to feel safe and secure in lessons. The atmosphere in lessons is conducive to learning. ICT is often utilised to stimulate

interest in students and in the better lessons, support independent learning. Many students know what their target level or grade is although in Years 7–9 it is not always clear what they should do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is developing well and there are some good features. The school provides an expanding range of vocational qualifications and further collaboration with local providers will add to guided choices for some students. However, it is too early to see the full impact of these initiatives on students' achievement. Both internal and external reviews have taken place and have identified some important considerations for future 14–19 arrangements. Some students have benefited from the additional literacy and numeracy lessons at Key Stage 4.

GOLD (Guidance, Organisation and Life Skills Development), the school's bespoke PSHE programme, has breadth, is well planned and ongoing developments are as a result of student and staff evaluations. The Enterprise in Action curriculum day was highlighted as an opportunity by students to work with others and the careers input on the GOLD programme for Year 11 students were identified as valuable. There are imaginative links developed with drama for the citizenship programme and for modern foreign languages with business studies, and the school has plans to utilise its specialist resources to further strengthen its links with feeder primary schools. Students enjoy and appreciate the extra-curricular activities and opportunities that the school provides, many of which are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for all groups of students are good. Strong staff commitment to all aspects of welfare ensures that students have the level of personal support that they require. Robust procedures for child protection, health and safety and risk assessment are in place and reviewed regularly. Vetting procedures for staff working directly with students are fully in place. Students feel safe in school and enjoy it. Bullying and racist incidents are rare. Attendance remains stubbornly below average even though the school makes every effort to improve it.

Transfer arrangements from primary school to Year 7 are exemplary and enable students to settle in very quickly and confidently. Relationships between adults and students are good and parents are very positive about the amount of personal support that their children receive. The setting of targets for students and the monitoring of their progress towards them is satisfactory and improving.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are some strong and developing features. The senior leadership team has created a clear vision which is well communicated throughout the school. Many new initiatives have been developed over the last few years and are beginning to have a positive impact. This can be seen in the improvement in GCSE results in 2006, which has been sustained in 2007, and the improvement in Key Stage 3 results in 2007. However, some initiatives are not fully embedded across all areas and so have not had their full impact.

The poor attendance of some students has not yet shown significant improvement and there is still a significant minority of students whose behaviour does not meet acceptable standards. The school is aware of these issues and is working hard to spread good practice and ensure consistency of approach.

The role of middle managers has been developed and they have a key part to play in the push for continuous improvement. Training is used well to support staff development with a programme of both in-house and external events. Self-evaluation is thorough, identifies strengths and areas for improvement and is effectively linked to planning and review processes. The use of targets has improved. There are many examples of targets being used well to support improvement in students' attainment. However, the effective use of challenging targets is not embedded across all areas.

The specialist status of the school has been used to good effect in supporting the drive to raise standards, improving resources and improving links, for example, links with primary schools. Governors have a clear view of the school and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. There is a good range of expertise on the governing body and they provide an appropriate level of challenge to the leadership team. The business manager ensures there is sound financial management in the school and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Newland School for Girls - A Mathematics & Computing College,
Kingston-upon-Hull, HU6 7RU.

Thank you for all of the help you gave to the inspectors when we were at your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing the work you were doing. As well as looking at your work we read the questionnaires completed by your parents; they were most helpful and the majority were very supportive of the school.

We think that your school is a satisfactory and improving school that has good potential to make further progress. We found that you are making satisfactory progress and now achieving satisfactorily in your examinations. Your personal development is good; although a number of you need to improve your attendance and some of you need to improve your behaviour. Staff are doing a lot of work to make sure you are taught well and ensure that computers are regularly available to you. The school has started to offer you a bigger choice of courses at Year 10 and 11 to help all of you succeed. The school looks after you very well and you say you enjoy school and feel safe there.

The staff know what has to be done to help you do the best you can and for the school to continue to improve. It is important that you play your part by making every effort to work hard. Some of you also need to improve your attendance as it is up to every one of you to do your best to come to school.

Your school has improved in many ways since the last inspection and with your support can make good progress in the future.

Yours sincerely

Heather Barnett, HMI