

The John Loughborough School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102167
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	319391
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline White HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	281
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Ms Oveta McInnis
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2007
School address	Holcombe Road Tottenham London N17 9AD
Telephone number	020 8808 7837
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves an inner-city area where there is high social deprivation. About one-third of the students travel from further afield. It is a denominational Seventh-day Adventist school, although over half of the students have other Christian faiths. Almost all the students are from Black African and Caribbean backgrounds with a few at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The proportion of students who join or leave the school during the year is higher than in most schools, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

In recent times, the school has experienced considerable instability in staffing including at senior leadership level.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards and teaching and learning.

Since the previous inspection, turbulence within the school and the local community has drained capacity for improvement and, until recently, diverted attention from what is most important: the needs of young learners.

The local authority has withdrawn delegated powers from the governing body. An interim executive board oversees the governance of the school competently. New leadership arrangements have recently come into place. The acting headteacher has been in post for nine weeks. She is supported by a full time associate assistant headteacher and an executive headteacher three days a week whose role is to provide spiritual leadership within the school. Both have been in post for the same period of time as the acting headteacher.

The acting headteacher is a strong leader who is already giving clear direction to the work of the school. She knows what needs to be done to improve the school and is putting appropriate strategies in place. In the short period of time she has been in post, she has developed a shared vision of success amongst staff and led the restructuring of the senior leadership team. Line management procedures have been clarified and successfully implemented. Data are used more effectively in Key Stage 4 to identify underachievement and trigger support to rectify it. A coaching programme is starting to tackle weaknesses in teaching. In addition, the acting headteacher is strengthening leadership across the school and stabilising staffing by making appointments to permanent posts through robust recruitment procedures. She is also addressing underperformance. These actions demonstrate satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Achievement and standards are inadequate. Students join the school with attainment that is just below average to reach standards that are below average at the end of Year 11. Students make stronger progress in Years 10 and 11 than they do in Years 7 to 9 where there is widespread underachievement in English, mathematics and science. There is a wide variation in performance between different GCSE subjects. These weaknesses reflect inconsistencies in teaching which is not always well matched to students' needs and, as a consequence, is inadequate.

The satisfactory curriculum has been reviewed. Closer consideration is given to students' interests and needs with sound plans for further improvement.

Generally, the ethos of the school is characterised by positive relationships. Satisfactory personal development ensures most students mature as responsible citizens aware of the relationship between their own actions and the well-being of the wider community. Most students have positive attitudes to school as shown by their above average attendance and satisfactory behaviour. In confirmation of the satisfactory care, guidance and support, students say they feel safe and cared for in school. The small proportion of parents who completed the inspection questionnaire or talked with inspectors, have mixed views about the school. Some feel the school is improving and some do not. Others are worried about the impact of too many temporary staff and the uncertainties around the leadership of the school.

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory but strongest at senior level. Not all leaders are demonstrating the capacity to evaluate the work of their teams to ensure the consistent implementation of policies and to drive up standards. The acting headteacher and associate assistant headteacher are leading the school improvement strategy with tenacity and conviction. The local authority is fully committed to the continuous improvement of the school and its support is valued by those carrying responsibility for securing it. The local authority recognises the environment of the school is tired and uninspiring. There are plans to invest significant sums of money in refurbishment and redevelopment through the 'Building Schools for the Future' scheme. In the school's view, this cannot happen too soon as the involvement of the school community in the project, especially of the students, will help to lift hearts and boost belief in a better future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards by increasing the proportion of good teaching and ensuring none is inadequate.
- Make sure teachers and learning support staff use assessment information to match learning objectives to students' needs and extend their understanding of how they can improve in subjects.
- Develop self-evaluation at the level of middle leadership with a sharp focus on students' achievement and the consistent implementation of policies and procedures.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

There was a significant dip in the proportion of students achieving five higher-grade GCSEs in 2007 compared to 2006. However, the proportion of students who attained English and mathematics in these five higher grades whilst still too low, improved. There is a wide difference in performance between subjects and there is unevenness in the rate of students' progress across key stages. Students' progress in Key Stage 3 is inadequate.

The achievement of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Students with Black British Caribbean and Black British African backgrounds underachieve compared to national expectations. Girls outperform boys with an achievement gap that is wider than the national average.

The school has put intervention and support strategies in place to keep students on track to achieve the challenging performance targets for 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory. As a consequence of provision, such as the links with the church and in assembly, students' spiritual development is satisfactory. Students also have a sound understanding of the multicultural world in which they live. They have a sense of right and wrong and value friendship. One commented, 'I've got lots of friends at John Loughborough.' These positive relationships help students to enjoy school. In lessons and around the school most students behave well and have constructive attitudes. However, a minority is less well behaved in lessons when work is not well matched to their learning needs. Students say they are confident that if problems occur they will be dealt with by the school staff. They are keen to take on responsibility within the school community, through the school

council, as prefects and house captains and as a result, their self-confidence grows. They have satisfactory attitudes to keeping fit and understand about making healthy choices. Attendance may be above the national average but many students are often late at the start of the school day and to some lessons and this has a negative impact on their progress. Students are currently not learning the basic skills they need for their future lives at a fast enough rate to ensure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Too many students are making insufficient progress. Although teachers often make clear what students will be doing in the lessons, information from assessment is not used well to plan work which meets the specific learning needs of all students. Consequently, opportunities are missed to extend learning and give students responsibility for developing and applying ideas.

When teachers set appropriate time limits for activities, it helps students to maintain their concentration. Students appreciate opportunities to talk about their learning. In geography for example, a discussion about migration was enjoyed. However, the pace of learning slows when students are required to listen to teachers talking for too long. In addition, time is often wasted because routines are not established and students do not settle to work quickly enough. There are shortcomings in marking; guidance on how students can make their work better is limited. The presentation of students' work is sometimes scruffy and tasks are left unfinished. Homework is not set systematically and does not always consolidate or deepen students' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Leaders recognise that Year 11 students have struggled to cope with a heavy load of core subjects and academic option choices. Changes have therefore been designed to reduce the number of compulsory subjects and move towards a more even balance between academic and vocational options. Given the constraints of its size, the school is sensibly developing links with other providers to extend the choice of courses available to students.

There is a strong focus on booster classes to raise standards but the opportunities for enrichment outside lessons are limited. Students enjoy sports activities, and there is an active choir. Visits such as a Year 9 trip to the Globe Theatre enhance students' enjoyment of learning and help to bring subjects to life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The individuality of students is valued and the well-being of every student matters. All necessary checks are rigorously carried out to keep students safe. An effective committee of school staff and external agencies meets regularly to arrange support for students who have been identified as having particular needs. Students receive helpful advice about their future education and career options. What they do not yet receive consistently are clear indications about the levels or grades they are working at, what they should aim to achieve and what they need to do to

get there. Leaders recognise the need to set meaningful individual targets for improvement in all subjects. They are developing a system for doing this that is yet to be fully implemented.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher has a clear understanding of the challenges facing the school and knows well its strengths and weaknesses. In the short time that she has been leading the school, she has tackled the priorities for improvement robustly. Together with the associate assistant headteacher she has set the school on a journey of improvement with a clear sense of direction and a better understanding of what success looks like and how it can be secured. The executive headteacher plays her part as the spiritual leader of the school.

Appropriate systems are being developed and implemented with growing signs of impact. For example, whilst teaching and learning overall are inadequate, records of monitoring show an increase in the proportion that is good. Regular line management meetings are making teachers more accountable for students' progress and strengthening teamwork.

Middle leaders are being involved in self-evaluation. However, this work is at an early stage of development. Target setting is not used well in all subject areas to remedy underachievement speedily. Not all staff are secure in their understanding of national curriculum levels and how they can accelerate students' progress in relationship to them. There is a lack of rigour in the use of assessment information to plan for, and evaluate students' learning.

The governance of the interim executive board is satisfactory. Those leading the team are passionately committed to the school. Improving outcomes for students is central to their agenda. Their involvement in monitoring the work of the school is increasing their capacity to drive improvement and influence the strategic direction of the school.

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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?	4
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	3

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	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 June 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The John Loughborough School, London, N17 9AD

My colleagues and I really enjoyed meeting you during the inspection this week. Thank you for talking to us so honestly about the school and the progress you are making. This letter summarises the findings of our inspection. Your parents or carers will have a copy of the full report should you wish to read it.

We found that in recent times your school has been unsettled and this has affected your progress. Your acting headteacher is working hard and effectively to sort things out. However, despite some recent improvements, she agrees with us that there is more that needs to be done to ensure that you all make as much progress as you should. You get on well with each other. Most of you enjoy school and feel safe and well looked after. You are keen to take responsibility within the school community, through the school council, and as prefects and house captains. When your attention is captured by good teaching closely matched to your needs, you make good progress but where lessons do not challenge you appropriately, your progress slows down. In addition, some of your targets do not give you clear and detailed guidance about how to improve in subjects. The leaders of the school want the best for you. We have asked them to:

- improve achievement and standards by increasing the proportion of good teaching and ensuring none is inadequate
- make sure teachers and learning support staff use assessment information to match learning objectives to your needs and extend your understanding of how to improve in subjects
- help team leaders review the work of their teams so they stay focused on how well you are learning and stick to school policies.

Inspectors will visit your school again to check how the school is progressing against these areas for improvement. You need to play your part by being punctual, determined learners who work hard as a team with the adults in the school in firm belief that, together, you can achieve anything. We wish you and your school every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline White

Her Majesty's Inspector