

Battersea Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101055
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	335651
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Helen Pennington

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	753
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graham Wickham
Headteacher	Mr Gale Keller
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 December 2006
School address	401 Battersea Park Road London SW11 5AP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 29 lessons taught by different teachers and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at development plans, progress and tracking data, school policies, students' work, questionnaires from 46 parents and carers and others from students and staff.

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

- the current level of attainment, particularly in English and mathematics
- the provision in the sixth form and how well it meets the needs of students
- the impact of leadership on raising achievement.

Because of the timing of this inspection, it was not possible for inspectors to observe lessons or meet with students in Key Stage 4.

Information about the school

Battersea Park, formerly Battersea Technology College, is a smaller than average secondary school with a small sixth form. The student population is ethnically diverse and nearly half the students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. A large number of students join or leave the school at different times during the academic year.

The school has held specialist status for the performing arts since 2007 and recently secured an International School Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Battersea Park has improved significantly in recent years and is now a good school. Its specialism in the performing arts makes an exceptional contribution to the experiences and achievements of the students. Activities inspired by the specialism, such as 'tea dances' for the older members of the community and work in drama, media studies and dance with primary schools, allow students to make a contribution which has a highly positive impact on the local community. In addition, summer schools and extended provision, such as swimming and dance classes and a course on motorcycle maintenance, further engage and contribute to the local community.

The school uses other partnerships exceptionally well to raise students' aspirations and secure experiences for them which would otherwise not be possible. A link with The Outward Bound Trust, funded by Deutsche Bank, allows all students to go on a five-day residential trip at least twice during their school career. The bank and other business partners provide mentors for students.

Students are exceptionally well cared for, guided and supported by the school and they are very appreciative of the excellent relationships that they have with the staff. They feel very safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe at other times. They have complete confidence that any matters they raise with staff will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

The majority of teaching observed by inspectors was good; there were occasional examples of outstanding teaching. The best was characterised by students being active participants in the lesson and enthusiastically engaged in work that took account of their prior knowledge and was challenging enough to secure rapid and significant progress. In less effective lessons, there was too much time when students were passive. This was because the teacher's instructions took too long, questioning or activities did not involve all students or because work was not appropriately pitched so that they either finished quickly or could not begin. This allowed students to lose concentration and slowed their progress.

GCSE attainment in mathematics and English was low in 2009. However, the school has engaged in rigorous intervention to improve this, including support from the local authority and from other schools, and reliable data indicate that GCSE results in these subjects will be close to national averages this year.

The sixth form is small and this restricts the range of courses the school is able to

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offer. Although the sixth form runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and leaders know that improvements are required, planning has not focused on finding creative ways to overcome the challenges presented by the size of the sixth form.

Students enjoy the diversity of the school population. They are interested in, and appreciative of, the similarities and differences between cultures, beliefs and ideas. They are respectful and supportive of each other. They engage very enthusiastically in the wealth of cultural, artistic and sporting activities available to them.

School leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have taken decisive action to bring about improvements. Enhanced provision, including a curriculum that more closely matches the needs of students in the main school and teaching that is consistently good, has contributed to better outcomes for students both in terms of achievement and personal development. These changes demonstrate the school's good capacity to make further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that lessons are active and students are challenged and stimulated by their work.
- Develop post-16 provision so that courses meet the needs and aspirations of all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

All groups of students, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress during their time at Battersea Park. Their current work and performance data provided by the school, as well as GCSE results in a number of subjects, indicate that attainment overall is now broadly average. Progress seen in lessons was generally good, as a result of good teaching and the positive attitudes students have towards their learning. All students who completed questionnaires reported that they enjoy school and those who met with inspectors spoke positively about the opportunities that the school offers.

Students behave well in lessons. Behaviour in the cramped, narrow corridors is also good, with students moving sensibly around the school. Students are keen to make a contribution to the school community and engage enthusiastically with school council and other activities, such as when a group of Year 9 students undertook training and became head of year for a day. Students are also involved in monitoring the quality of teaching they receive, giving their feedback on observed lessons.

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The school prepares students well for the world of work. The personal, social and health education programme contains elements that focus on securing economic well-being. The school’s specialist status again plays a role in helping students to develop self-confidence and good communication skills and to take part in team activities. Mentors from the school and from external partner organisations help students to understand the steps they need to take to succeed in the future. One Year 12 student commented that the school ‘gives us key skills for employment and university’.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Students at the school have a very wide range of opportunities, many through the school’s specialism or other partnerships. Elements of media studies are taught throughout the school and students appreciate the benefits that this additional breadth provides, including exposure to new technologies, which helps to engage and motivate them. Indeed, inspectors observed technology being well used in several subjects to enhance teaching and learning. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has expanded to include a range of vocational courses. There is sufficient flexibility for individuals to follow other courses that interest them, such as astronomy and Latin, and there are plans in place to broaden the provision further to meet the needs of students of all abilities. The Year 7 curriculum contains a ‘transition model’ which allows students to be taught by a single teacher for 20% of the time. Students

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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appreciate the stability provided by this arrangement.

All students know their target levels or grades in each subject, and most have specific, helpful guidance about exactly what they need to do to achieve them. In some lessons, students have the opportunity to assess their own and their classmates’ work which helps them to understand the marking criteria and how to improve what they do themselves.

Students spoke appreciatively about the positive relationships they have with the school staff and their confidence that there is always an adult who will help them, should they need it. One student considered it a strength of the support available that ‘there is someone who isn’t family or a friend to help when it’s stressful at school’. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities spoke highly of the support they receive both in and out of lessons. Transition arrangements, including for those who join the school at different times during the year, are planned to ensure that students feel welcome, settle quickly and receive promptly any additional help they may need. Very effective systems for discouraging absence have resulted in an improvement in attendance overall and a significant reduction in the proportion of students who are persistently absent from school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The vision and ambition of the headteacher and his leadership team is shared by the school as a whole. Progress on the school improvement plan is reviewed monthly by senior and middle leaders and, as a result, they are thoroughly conversant with the priorities for the school and focus their work appropriately. Curriculum leaders are effective, dynamic and relentless in their desire to secure improvement in the quality of teaching and in outcomes for students. They use data effectively to track student progress and a range of interventions is available to ensure that students achieve as much as they can. There is a little less rigour in the way the progress of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is monitored and analysed.

A policy to ensure equality of opportunity is in place. Great care is taken to ensure that all groups of students participate in all that the school offers and there are no discernible differences in the performance of any groups. Governors know the school well. They are supportive and provide appropriate challenge. All required

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safeguarding procedures are in place and record keeping in relation to the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers is exemplary.

The school community is highly cohesive, with different groups of students getting on well together. Partnerships with other schools and businesses, nationally and internationally, help students to understand their place in the world. A complete understanding of the school’s context means that work focused on bringing the local community together has a very positive impact. The school garden, where local people unable to secure allotments now have plots that they work on with students, is one example of many where the school and community members are working together for mutual benefit.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Sixth form students contribute well to the life of the school and wider community in a number of ways. They work with younger Battersea Park students as mentors and in paired reading as well as being role models in the Outward Bound activities. They also work with students from other local schools, including a school for students who have visual impairments. They are appreciative of the support they receive both through good teaching and out of lessons. The very good relationships between staff and students that are evident in the main school continue to be a highly positive feature in the sixth form.

Sixth form resources are adequate. The choice of subjects is restricted and currently there are no Level 1 courses offered, although there are plans in place to extend

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provision as student numbers increase. Students make the progress expected of them given their starting points and their attainment has improved in recent years. In the past, they have generally been more successful on vocational courses than in A levels.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
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

There was a low response to the parental questionnaires. All who responded, however, said that their children enjoy school and that the school helps them to support their children’s learning. A very large number said that the school keeps their children safe and inspectors agree. A few parents and carers were not confident that the school prepares their children well for the future. Inspectors looked closely at this and found that the school does a great deal in this regard. Students are overwhelmingly positive about this aspect of their learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Battersea Park 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 753 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	65	16	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	59	17	37	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	65	15	33	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	59	17	37	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	63	15	33	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	54	21	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	35	25	54	5	11	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)	26	57	13	28	4	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	50	20	43	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	54	17	37	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	33	26	57	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	61	16	35	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	78	7	15	1	2	2	4

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 all 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 are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and are the most recently published data available (see 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">■ 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 pupils' 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.



12 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Battersea Park School, London SW11 5AP

Thank you for your contribution to the inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work. We judged that yours is a good school. Specialist status in performing arts and other partnerships, like Outward Bound, provide you with opportunities that you take part in enthusiastically. We were impressed that some of you have learned a range of dances so that you can engage with older members of your community and by the number of other ways in which you make the school and the local community a better place.

You are very well cared for, guided and supported by the school and have very positive relationships with staff. You told us that as well as feeling very safe, you are confident that there is always someone available to help or advise. You appreciate, and make the most of, the diversity of the student population. You are respectful of, and interested in, cultural differences and you get on well together.

The choice of subjects for sixth formers is limited. We have asked the school to develop the post-16 curriculum to extend the range of provision so that courses meet the needs and aspirations of all of you who wish to study.

Most of the teaching we saw was good. We have asked the school to make more of it outstanding by ensuring that you are always actively involved, engaged and challenged by your work. You can help by always taking an active part in lessons and by continuing to make the most of all that your school offers.

We wish you continued success.

Yours sincerely

Helen Pennington
Lead inspector

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