

The Harbour School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135308
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	381866
Inspection dates	7–8 March 2012
Lead inspector	Jon Carter

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Mitchell
Headteacher	Sally Garrett
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 June 2009
School address	151 Locksway Road Milton Portsmouth PO4 8LD
Telephone number	023 9281 8547
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Boarding/Residential provision	The Harbour Hostel @ Tipner
Social care unique reference number	SC012026
Social care inspector	Brian McQuoid

Age group	5–16
Inspection date(s)	7–8 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jon Carter	Additional inspector
Jackie Blount	Additional inspector
Keith Tysoe	Additional inspector
Brian McQuoid	Social care regulatory inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 18 teachers and appropriately qualified support staff which totalled approximately 10 hours. They listened to pupils read and discussed different aspects of their work with them. Meetings were held with representatives from the governing body and members of staff holding leadership responsibilities at the school. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information, the school's analysis of pupils' progress, curriculum plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of the school leaders' lesson monitoring. Inspectors also analysed responses from the 52 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

The Harbour School is larger and more complex than most special schools. Nearly all pupils have special educational needs connected to their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The largest ethnic group in the school is made up of pupils from White British backgrounds. The school has a much smaller than average percentage of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. A much smaller than average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Three times as many boys as girls attend the school. There is a high turnover of pupils throughout the year. This is because many pupils are dual-registered, being on the roll of their mainstream school as well as that of The Harbour School, and the impact of the school's reintegration programme. This is offered to enable pupils to return to mainstream school education or other specialist provision. A large proportion of pupils reintegrate within seven to 18 months of joining The Harbour School.

The school delivers its services over five sites across the city.

- The Cosham site provides 42 full-time places for pupils in Years 7 to 11 who are unable to access school because of medical and emotional reasons.
- The Tipner site provides 72 full-time places for pupils in Years 5 to 9 and a residential hostel providing eight Monday-to-Thursday residential places for pupils across the school. The Fratton site provides 50 full-time places for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils at the Tipner and Fratton sites either are at risk of

exclusion from mainstream school or permanent exclusion, or have a statement of special educational needs indicating placement at a special school.

- The Stamshaw site provides 10 full-time places offering individualised therapeutic programmes for pupils with severe and complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. This provision operates all year round.
- The Milton site is the base for the Individual Tuition Service (ITS) for pupils in Reception to Year 11, the Young Parent Support Service (YPSS), the Multi-Agency Behaviour Support Service (MABS), which offers outreach support to children and young people, families and schools and the Targeted Mentoring Support Service (TMSS) which offers flexible packages for mainstream school pupils who are at risk of dropping out of education and work-based learning at the end of Year 11.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- The overall effectiveness of The Harbour School and its residential provision is good. Pupils’ achievement has improved. It is not yet outstanding as teaching, while typically good, is not yet of the highest quality in mathematics. A common approach to improving pupils’ social and emotional development is well established on all sites. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching of mathematics.
- Pupils’ good achievement ensures that they make good progress in their learning from below average levels of attainment when they join the school. Accelerated progress is often made in English because staff are skilled at identifying and addressing gaps in pupils’ learning. Progress in mathematics is less rapid. Pupils’ skills, knowledge and understanding develop well in practical subjects.
- Teaching uses comprehensive assessment information well so that lessons and activities are closely matched to pupils’ emotional, behavioural and learning needs. Relationships with pupils are strong and promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Skills and confidence in teaching literacy have improved, but at times, teaching in mathematics is less inspiring and does not always challenge pupils consistently.
- Pupils’ positive attitudes to learning are fostered very effectively through the school’s consistent focus on social and emotional development. Strategies to modify pupils’ behaviour often results in their successful reintegration to mainstream education. While strategies for reducing pupils’ absence are often successful, attendance is below average.
- School leaders and the residential manager secure improvement well. Self-evaluation is accurate and any weaknesses are acted upon swiftly. Middle leaders are increasingly effective in monitoring teaching. Personalised coaching and support, linked strongly to performance management, have contributed positively to improving teaching quality. Training is purposeful and shared effectively between staff across the different sites.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the rate at which pupils make progress in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring teaching provides inspiring opportunities that challenge pupils consistently across the school
 - providing training, modelling and support for non-specialist staff to improve their mathematical skills and knowledge
 - ensuring mathematics features as prominently as other subjects in the school’s professional development training programme.

- Improve pupils’ attendance, by ensuring that:
 - all pupils have a highly personalised curriculum which engages them throughout the school week
 - the threshold for implementing a pupil attendance plan is well matched to the attendance profile on each site so that pupils are appropriately challenged to improve their attendance.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils, all of whom have disabilities and/or special educational needs, make good progress in lessons. They are well motivated and respond positively to learning activities that are well matched to their strengths and preferences. For example, pupils in Years 8 and 9 on the Cosham site improved their collaborative working skills during an exciting mock crime scene investigation activity. Literacy skills develop very well through established daily routines that improve reading, handwriting and spelling quickly, especially on the Tipner site, where progress in English is exceptionally rapid. This helps to ensure that most pupils, including those reaching the end of Year 6 during their placement, successfully close the gap between their reading age and their chronological age. Pupils make good progress overall in mathematics although achievement is inconsistent across the different sites. Older pupils, particularly those at the Fratton and Stamshaw sites, progress slightly more quickly in mathematics than English. Progress is faster when pupils are challenged at appropriate levels and use and apply their skills frequently in real-life situations, such as weighing ingredients used in cooking.

Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after make similar progress to their peers. The small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages make slightly slower progress overall. There are no appreciable differences between boys’ and girls’ performance. Pupils who have autistic spectrum conditions and those who have complex behavioural and emotional difficulties make satisfactory progress over time in subjects such as English and mathematics. However, these pupils also make significant progress in developing improved social communication skills and attitudes to learning. This helps them to overcome their difficulties and underpins their progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Parents and carers are very positive about the impact the school has

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on their children's achievement, typically writing comments such as: 'His whole attitude has changed at this school and his work has improved.'

Pupils often join the school with below average levels of attainment due to their previously disrupted education. While they make good progress during their time at The Harbour School, levels of attainment remain below average overall. This is because placements are often relatively short and pupils are successfully reintegrated to mainstream education following rapid and sustained improvements in their behaviour. Pupils who complete their statutory education at The Harbour School leave with a range of appropriate accreditation, including recognition of their personal development through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as well as GCSE and entry-level qualifications.

Quality of teaching

Teaching, including individual tuition, takes increasingly good account of all aspects of pupils' development in planning engaging learning activities that are personalised well to meet individual needs. A strong emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of learning is very effective in focusing pupils on how to be successful learners. Pupils are clear that this approach works well for them and is more appropriate than their previous experiences of education. One pupil, whose views echoed those of many of his peers, commented: 'They break learning down into smaller steps, it's easier for us then.' Teaching is strongest in English due to a concerted and effective focus on staff development in this area since the previous inspection. Consequently, literacy is usually taught well because teachers understand how to overcome the specific difficulties pupils experience and set them appropriately challenging targets to reach. Occasionally, staff have insufficient detailed knowledge of teaching reading – the learning of letter sounds and combinations (often known as phonics) to help older pupils most effectively. Resources are used well to support learning, in a Years 8 and 9 English lesson about 'Tales of the Unexpected' individual whiteboards were used to help pupils to develop their writing and communication skills.

Where teaching is confident in mathematics, lessons are inspiring and engaging for pupils. However, the school has not yet provided the same level of training for staff in mathematics as it has in English. Teachers who take their classes for most subjects do not always have the comprehensive knowledge shown by their specialist colleagues on other sites, and pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging work. Enterprise activities build pupils' practical skills well, give them improved economic understanding and encourage better attendance.

Pupils' work is marked regularly with clear guidance about how improvements can be made, although pupils do not always show that they have used this feedback to improve their future work. Staff model the use of subject specific language well. They prompt and question pupils expertly to encourage deeper thinking, such as in a Year 10 science lesson about protein in foods, where pupils were encouraged to explain their answers fully. Teaching assistants and other support staff are usually deployed effectively. This ensures that pupils receive good quality support for their

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behaviour and learning needs. Pupils respond well to the models of behaviour provided by staff, showing improvements in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through greater tolerance and better attitudes towards other people. The positive views of parents and carers about the quality of teaching are confirmed by inspection findings.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The consistent approaches to behaviour management and modification adopted across the school are very effective in overcoming pupils' behavioural difficulties. Staff model strong and appropriate relationships well. This typically leads to pupils demonstrating considerate, respectful and courteous behaviour towards others. As a result, all sites are calm and purposeful, disruption to learning is infrequent and pupils are safe. Residential pupils all reported feeling safe within the hostel and observations supported this view.

Pupils develop good levels of social interaction as a result of carefully structured learning opportunities. They make good progress over time in developing improved self-confidence and better attitudes to others, including those who have different cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation or beliefs. Consequently, prejudice-based incidents and bullying, including those linked to racism or homophobia, occur rarely. When they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Residential pupils indicated that bullying was not a problem in the hostel and that they had been supported in making significant improvements with their behaviour. Parents' and carers' views concur with these inspection findings.

The recent implementation of a greater range of effective strategies to improve attendance is having a positive effect. The full impact of these strategies is not always reflected in the school's data as pupils who improve their engagement with education are often reintegrated to mainstream school. There are a few occasions where the curriculum is not tailored well enough to meet pupils' needs. As a result, a few pupils are not fully engaged with learning throughout the school week. The threshold at which the school provides individual pupils with a plan to help raise their attendance is the same across all sites, although the profile of prior attendance is often different. Consequently, the expectations of improvement are not as challenging for some pupils as they are for others. Pupils who are young parents accessing part-time provision on the Milton site successfully remain in education due to the support they are given to find nurseries and apply for college places.

Leadership and management

Senior and middle leaders have developed in their roles and are very effective. They contribute strongly to providing school-wide training and highly focused coaching and mentoring for individual staff. Professional development opportunities for individual staff are carefully linked to school improvement priorities and subsequently passed on to the wider staff team. The improvements in leadership, teaching and achievement demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve.

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Leaders and managers at all levels, including members of the governing body, have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The focus over recent years on promoting literacy skills, through the modelling of good teaching for non-specialist staff, has ensured accelerated progress in English for most pupils. School leaders recognise that similar activities are not yet in place for mathematics and that staff development in this area is less prominent. Nevertheless, the school now has tried and tested systems in place and appropriately qualified staff are set for this work to be undertaken.

The curriculum is flexible and built around a programme of social and emotional development which addresses pupils' special educational needs well. The structure prepares pupils well for learning and enables them to cope better with difficulties, such as making mistakes and having disagreements, they may experience. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through effectively linked subjects that challenge pupils and require them to respond maturely. For example, a Year 11 English lesson required pupils to recognise bias and discuss the influence of propaganda in historical contexts.

Leaders promote equality and tackle discrimination well. Safeguarding arrangements are managed very effectively in both school and residential provision. The overall effectiveness of the residential experience for pupils within the school's 'hostel' is good. All of the national minimum standards are being met and four suggestions are made as to how the school might improve its residential provision further. Residential pupils receive a consistently good quality of care which has a positive impact on their lives, clearly enhancing their personal, social and educational development. Care staff work closely with teaching staff and external agencies to achieve positive outcomes for pupils. The residential provision is seen as an integral aspect of the school and serves the best interests of pupils. Parents and carers value the service extremely highly and pupils thoroughly enjoy their time spent in the hostel. The provision has a number of areas of strength and there are no significant areas of weakness which have any impact on the outcomes for pupils.

Boarding/residential provision

Outcomes for residential pupils at the school are outstanding. They enjoy exceptionally good relationships with the care staff group within the hostel and feel safe and well cared for while staying there. Pupils identify strongly with the residential environment, referring to it as being 'like one big family' and a 'home from home'. Parents and carers are equally positive, using words such as 'brilliant' and 'amazing' to describe the hostel and the staff caring for their children. The location of the hostel enables the school facilities to be accessed outside of the school day. The hostel provides pupils with an extensive range of activities and some have benefited from acquiring new skills while staying there, such as learning to play a musical instrument. Pupils are confident in approaching staff. They are able to express their views and influence events within the hostel. Healthy lifestyles are promoted very well within the residential provision. Pupils are encouraged to be independent. Staff prepare pupils well for the transition to the next stage of their education.

Care staff work closely and collaboratively with education staff. They attend regular meetings to review plans for individual pupils which contribute very effectively to the provision for each pupil and link closely to the school's emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of learning. Plans address all aspects of need although they do not always show how pupils were involved in their formation. Communication between school and hostel staff takes place on a daily basis and contributes effectively to ensuring a consistent approach to working with individual pupils. Parents and carers describe having excellent communication with staff in the hostel and are made welcome when they visit. Pupils are able to maintain contact with their families and there is appropriate provision for keeping their possessions safe.

There is good provision for ensuring the safety of residential pupils. The residential accommodation is well maintained and provides a safe and secure environment for pupils which they respect. Safeguarding policies and procedures promote good practice. Staff within the hostel have received appropriate training. They have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. Recruitment procedures provide appropriate safeguards and are effectively implemented. Staff provide clear and consistent boundaries for pupils and engage them in incentive schemes designed to reward their positive behaviour. Sanctions within the hostel are at an extremely low level. Pupils report having good relationships with staff and being treated fairly by them.

The hostel is seen as an integral part of the school and operates very effectively on a day-to-day basis. There are clear aims for the residential provision which are being well met. Care staff operate very effectively as a team and possess sufficient experience and qualifications to be able to meet the needs of individual pupils. Staffing levels are good and enable the effective supervision of pupils at all times. Staff performance management systems operate effectively. All of the recommendations from the previous inspection report have been satisfactorily addressed. School governors carry out termly monitoring visits and provide written reports for the school.

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

These are the grades for the boarding provision/These are the grades for the residential provision

Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience/ Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	1
Quality of residential provision and care	2
Residential pupils' safety	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	2

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



9 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Harbour School, Portsmouth, PO4 8LD

Thank you for welcoming us into the different parts of your school when we visited you recently. We enjoyed speaking with you about your experiences of being at school and watching you work with staff in lessons. You told us that your school does a good job because it helps you to learn in the ways that suit you best. We agree The Harbour School is a good school which has improved since the last inspection.

Pupils at your school make good progress overall but often do better in English than maths. The progress that pupils make in improving their behaviour is good because every lesson has a 'SEAL' focus so that it is really clear which learning behaviour is the focus for the lesson. Your good behaviour in school contributes strongly to making it a good place to learn – well done! This means that the staff teaching your lessons can concentrate on making the curriculum interesting and exciting for you and supporting you to make good progress.

There are two areas that we have asked the school to concentrate on improving:

- how quickly pupils make progress in maths
- pupils' attendance at school.

You can all help by coming to school every day and letting your teachers know if something can be changed to make you want to come in more frequently.

Best wishes for the future, especially if you are about to go back to mainstream school.

Yours sincerely
Jon Carter
Lead inspector

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