

# Hazel Court School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114694
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	357589
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Marshall

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	83
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	32
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Geoff Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Gordon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Larkspur Drive Eastbourne BN23 8EJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 465720
<b>Fax number</b>	01323 740121
<b>Email address</b>	office@hazelcourt.e-sussex.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 September 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	357589

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons and 12 ♦ teachers were observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior management team, teaching, support and administrative staff, governors, parents and students. The school's documentation was scrutinised carefully and included school development plans, the tracking of students' progress, staff and governor meeting records and safeguarding documentation. In addition, 57 questionnaires from parents and carers, 56 staff questionnaires and 54 pupil questionnaires were analysed. ♦

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

- The effectiveness of the school's assessment, use of CASPA (Comparison and Analysis of Special Pupil Attainment) data, and tracking procedures to plan for individual students' needs.
- The impact of the school's provision on students' personal development.
- How curriculum and additional activities, especially through their co-location, meet individual needs and contribute to overall outcomes for students.
- How successfully the leaders and managers, including the governors, enable provision to be as effective as possible and therefore enhance improvements in students' achievement.

## Information about the school

Hazel Court School provides education for students who have severe, complex or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Many students have additional disabilities, including sensory impairment, physical difficulties, epilepsy, autism and challenging behaviour. The school has two sites, both purpose built as co-locations with mainstream schools. The main secondary site has up to 55 places for students from Years 7–11. The post-16 further education (FE) department site for up to 39 students is at an FE College three miles away. Both sites were the first purpose built co-locations in the country. Hazel Court students automatically move from the secondary school to the FE department at the end of Year 11. Although still technically a severe learning difficulty (SLD) school, Hazel Court attracts a small number of students who have abilities into the low MLD (moderate learning difficulty) range, with a higher percentage in the FE department than in secondary.

Although the majority of students come from the locality, one quarter come from across the county. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. An average number of students are eligible for free school meals. A well-above-average number of students are children in care.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Hazel Court is an outstanding special school that is highly effective in meeting the complex and diverse needs of its students. The school's success is due to the knowledge, understanding and efficiency of the management, the outstanding quality of care provided and excellent relationships with parents and carers. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors provide highly effective leadership. They know the school's strengths very well and what needs to be refined further. Their track record of carefully and continuously improving their provision to meet the needs of all students shows that the school has an excellent capacity to continue improving.

The most obvious and affecting aspect of the school that visitors rightly recognise is the dedication and commitment of all staff, at all times. ♦ Through their consistent working practices, staff promote their belief that each child is unique and a valued individual with the right to respect and positive self-image. The students' individual profiles and records seen actively support their commitment enshrined in their inspirational Pupils' and Students' Charter.

The outstanding range of equipment and facilities create a beautifully maintained and welcoming environment. Along the corridors, students' work, as exemplified by their large self-portraits, is testament to the school's great success. Staff take great pride in the displays, which praise and encourage students for their achievements. The joy that all students express shows that they, in turn, are proud of their school, and what they are able to achieve. Thanks to the individual care they receive, they all work very hard and progress outstandingly well. The overwhelming majority of parents are right in their judgement that this is an excellent school. One spoke on behalf of almost all by writing succinctly, 'Hazel Court is outstanding ♦ we are so lucky to be part of this amazing school. Cannot praise it or its staff highly enough. Thank you.'

Teaching is never less than good and, in most instances, is outstanding. Teachers plan comprehensively to meet the individual needs of students and they deploy the many additional adults in the classroom expertly so that all students can flourish at a level that is appropriate for them. The school has developed an exemplary use of a range of assessment data so that the students' progress, across a variety of complex needs, can be systematically demonstrated. As a result, any modifications for their needs are made instantly and effectively.



As a result of the outstanding curriculum and exemplary care, students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Many parents commented on how much their children enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their positive attitudes in

**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

lessons and around the school. The school has a strong emphasis on the implementation of thorough and practical behaviour plans. As a result, the behaviour of students improves considerably, particularly the behaviour of those with autistic spectrum conditions. Given the number of medical conditions some students have, their attendance overall is good.

The school's careful audit of community cohesion clearly illustrates how much they achieve in preparing students for the outside world. While links with the local community are excellent, students' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom are in need of development.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Enhance students' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by: implementing its plans to link with schools in other localities.
  - drawing together and putting into practice the findings of its analysis of the school's context
  - implementing its plans to link with schools in other localities.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>1</b>
----------

Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that, throughout the school, all groups of students make excellent progress. It was impressive to observe, in all lessons, impeccable behaviour and the excellent skills students acquire in working independently or with their classmates. This helps to create the high quality climate for learning that was evident in all classes.

Students' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. The students also make excellent progress with their lifeskills as the outstanding curriculum provides an extensive range of opportunities to develop them, for example through off-site visits and visitors to school. It is also the school's co-location with the mainstream schools that provides so many excellent opportunities and promotes students' outstanding progress.

Students respond extremely well to encouragement to maintain a healthy lifestyle in relation to diet, exercise and emotional development. The whole-school warm-up of 30 minutes first thing in the morning, every day, is inspirational. The deputy headteacher led this session on the first day of the inspection with enthusiasm and rigour that were outstanding. Thanks to the care shown by all adults, every student was able to join in and make excellent progress. Through these, and many other efforts, the school ensures that students achieve excellent outcomes in their physical and emotional development.

Students maintain a high level of self-esteem and dignity due to the excellent relationships they have with adults and the sensitive way in which their needs are met, as when specific care or medical support are provided. ♦ The strength of the relationships students develop was demonstrated admirably in a meeting of the School Council. All the students present were enabled to take part in their own way, and most made their opinions evident very well.

**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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

All lesson observations, both in the main school and FE department, showed staff working together as a highly cohesive team. The very full planning enabled all students to make excellent progress. The work of teaching assistants is outstanding and they give careful and sensitive support to students in lessons. Lessons are always conducted in a peaceful and industrious atmosphere and learning moves on at a fast pace. Teachers always give clear instructions and explanations and make particularly good use of signs and symbols to involve students and to make their meaning clear.

A series of outstanding lessons on the hunt for the Minotaur, with Years 7, 8 and 9 students, were a good example of how effective all lessons are. The sessions began with the teacher telling the story very expressively using the interactive whiteboard. All students were involved at their own level of ability. The hunt was a success as the students acknowledged and as they enjoyed the treasure they had found. This moved, in the following lesson, to students making plaster of Paris armour to protect themselves. The level of excitement and involvement the next day on making ancient Greek pancakes was highly impressive.

The curriculum is excellent, because its breadth is well matched to the needs of all. The curriculum design ensures inclusion is central to all planning. Creativity and multi-sensory

**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

activities across all departments promote students' enjoyment and communication skills. An outstanding lesson observed was based on students needing to learn to wash their hands well, and the reasons why. The curriculum gives emphasis to everyday skills such as communication, empathy for others and working together, as demonstrated in the student council meeting. Links with the wider community are extremely well developed. The FE department's focus on appropriate external accreditation is exceptional and promotes equality of access to the next stage of education at college or in training.

Guidance for students' academic support is exceptionally strong. The detailed tracking of their progress ensures that all particular requirements for each student are identified and made available. The challenging targets reflect the staff's high expectations of students' progress. The careful planning and focus on students' targets are implemented with enthusiasm and care. The targets prepared relate both to National Curriculum requirements and students' own specific needs. It was clear that all students fully understood and shared their targets. Parents are also aware of these targets and one wrote, 'My child has made excellent progress at Hazel Court. The whole school is totally committed to my son and also to me as a parent.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, drive and ambition to sustain an excellent capacity to improve. This, in partnership with the senior teachers, ensures that complacency is not tolerated and there is equality of opportunity for all. Teamwork is excellent and everyone, including the administrative team and caretaking staff, are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. Staff are focused relentlessly on further improvement and they work brilliantly together. As one staff member wrote, 'Hazel Court is a fantastic place to work and I am proud to be part of such a dynamic team who strive to maintain the school's excellent standards.' This all ensures there is no evidence of any discrimination.

The school knows itself very well and its evaluation of its work is honest and accurate. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging but supportive manner.

Excellent attention is paid by managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safety and care for the students. Students' safety and well-being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. Students are further protected by rigorous staff recruitment and selection procedures, which show a careful

**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

vetting and a robust selection process being undertaken. The senior managers, supported well by all staff, are effective in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination for all students across all aspects of the school's work. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. The school is in the process of implementing its plans for greater national links in order to raise this aspect of community cohesion to the outstanding level of the rest of its provision.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

The aim of the sixth form (FE Department) is to prepare their students for an active and involved adult life, and this aim is fully realised through their excellent practice. Their co-located premises, in the middle of an active FE college, gives the students the perfect opportunity to expand their horizons and take opportunities for learning. The outstanding curriculum meets the students' diverse range of needs and abilities exceptionally well. It is very carefully planned and varied, with the many experiences required to move the students towards being independent adults. The quality and variety of the outstanding activities and leisure pursuits promote the students' independence skills and self-confidence. There is excellent provision available to enable students to access the resources in the wider community. Staff know all the students well and are clear about their individual needs and the steps to take to enhance personal growth. As one parent wrote, 'My son joined the FE department from another secondary school. His progress while at the FE has been outstanding. His transition to the FE was handled very well.'

The FE department is outstandingly well led and managed and provides a more adult environment, where the students can learn to cope with their futures during later college life. The fact that all but one student moved onto a college placement last year shows how successful they are. Nothing is ever too much trouble and the way that resources have



**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

been improved since the last inspection has meant that the students have made even better progress since then. This shows the staff's high level of commitment and the FE department's outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

## Views of parents and carers

A large proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaires, and the overwhelming majority, and all of those who spoke to the inspection team, are very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and the headteacher leads and manages it exceptionally well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and that their children make outstanding progress. Inspectors fully endorse these views. The views of the parents were offered constructively, and were discussed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hazel Court 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 83 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	77	13	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	93	4	7	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	49	86	8	14	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	79	14	19	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	89	6	11	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	81	10	18	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	84	9	16	0	0	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)	48	84	8	14	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	84	9	16	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	84	9	16	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	89	6	11	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	89	6	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	88	6	11	0	0	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



1 October 2010

◆ Dear Students

◆ Inspection of Hazel Court School, Eastbourne BN23 8EJ

◆ I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is an outstanding school with many strengths, and we agree with what you told us ◆ it is a really great place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- The school looks after you extremely carefully and you all achieve exceptionally well by the time you leave the school.
- You behave brilliantly, get along with each other and feel very safe in school.
- You have very good ideas about how to make things better and you have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do, in school, on visits and in clubs.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school extremely well.

◆ Even in excellent schools, some things can be made better. I have asked the teachers to make sure that you are given the chance to look at and understand how children and adults live in places in the United Kingdom that are different from where you live.

◆ Finally, we would like to thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

◆ Yours sincerely

◆ David Marshall

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**