

# Little Heath School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102878
<b>Local Authority</b>	Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	355274
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kay (Kathleen) Charlton

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

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<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>	142
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	20
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Clive Raynor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 September 2010
<b>School address</b>	Hainault Road Little Heath Romford RM6 5RX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Twenty-two lessons were seen covering all teachers. Meetings were held with the School Improvement Partner, students, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation such as the school improvement plan, teachers' planning, assessment information and records of monitoring. Twenty-four questionnaires from parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- How well teaching challenges all students in the light of the wider complexity of needs of the student population.
- The success of the curriculum in meeting students' individual needs.
- The effectiveness of the systems to ensure students' learning targets are sufficiently challenging and how well students are involved in using these so that they make the progress of which they are capable.
- The impact of leaders and managers, with a focus on recent changes in the senior team, in ensuring that all students achieve as well as they can.

## Information about the school

Little Heath is a special school catering for students with a wide range of needs, from moderate to severe learning difficulties. The complexity of students' needs has increased over time and there are a significant number with autism and speech and language difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs and a small number have very specialist needs. Students come from a wide geographic area covering Redbridge and neighbouring local authorities. They are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds with the greatest proportion from White British and Asian backgrounds. Very few are from homes where English is not the main language spoken. The school has a number of national awards including Sportsmark and the Spirited Arts 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

Little Heath is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features notably in students' personal development and in the care, guidance and support they receive. Behaviour is good and students of all ages contribute exceptionally well to both the school and local community. Students, including those in the sixth form, thoroughly enjoy learning and, as a result of good teaching, make good progress and achieve well. Some lessons are outstanding as seen in those taught by members of the senior leadership team. However, in a minority of lessons, staff do not always make the best use of the students' learning targets to challenge students with very differing abilities to achieve all that they might. The school has rightly highlighted this as a priority for improvement.

The good curriculum includes a very strong programme of personal and social development and an impressive range of enrichment activities including some visits abroad. It has been adapted well to meet the changing needs of the student population and further developments, such as refining students' individual schedules, are taking place. Links with parents and carers, through very high quality home/school liaison work, as well as with other schools and outside agencies, are excellent. These links, coupled with extremely effective safeguarding procedures and the very strong relationships established between staff and students, underpin the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. As a result, students feel very safe and secure. They make noticeable gains in their confidence, independence and in their ability to reflect about the effects of their actions on others. They are extremely aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. The relatively new leadership team has a good balance of skills and experience and a strong determination to improve even further. Leaders are rigorous in their monitoring and very open to challenge, for example to that provided by the governing body. They ensure that all staff are fully involved in the school's self-review process so that there is clarity about strengths and, also, of relative weaknesses. The school has rightly identified that community cohesion is very effective at a local level but it is not sufficiently developed at national and international levels for students to learn more about the lives of others in a wider context. The promotion of equality of opportunity is central to the school's work and staff say, 'We never give up on any student whatever their needs.' Improvements since the last inspection, for example in the tracking of students' progress and in the monitoring systems, along with the strong commitment from all staff and the governing body to wanting the best for every student, mean that the school is well placed for future improvement.

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

- Improve teaching by ensuring that staff use the planned learning targets consistently to challenge all students to achieve as well as they can.
- Develop community cohesion at national and international levels so that students learn more about other communities in the United Kingdom and beyond.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

From a wide range of starting points, students of different backgrounds and abilities, including those with complex needs, make good progress and reach the challenging targets set by the school. Virtually all gain a range of accreditation by Year 11, including vocational, GCSE and Entry Level qualifications. They enjoy their lessons and persevere well in their learning. In an outstanding Year 9 English lesson, they contributed exceptionally well when assessing the quality of each other's presentations about their families. As part of this assessment the teacher ensured that the students used the planned learning targets as the key criteria for success. High quality use of assessment is not, however, evident in all lessons.

Students learn about tolerance, respect, love and friendship through highly imaginative projects. For example, one which involved students in videoing aspects of their home life to help them understand feelings associated with being a member of a family. The students' work submitted for the Spirited Arts award and their responses to moments of reflection in assembly demonstrate their excellent spiritual awareness. Students readily turn to adults when in need of support and have the confidence to 'speak up' for themselves. Lunchtime is a very harmonious occasion when students demonstrate very good social skills. Their understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle is excellent. They take part enthusiastically in activities such as football, sailing and outdoor pursuits as well as timetabled physical education sessions. This is recognised by the Sportsmark award and by the school's active participation in the local Sports Partnership. Students make excellent contributions to the school community through the school council, by acting as 'buddies' and, in a wider context, by contributing to a local magazine and by helping to make Epping Forest a better place for all. Students' good attendance and academic skills and, particularly their very strong personal and social skills, prepare them well for life after school. As a result, the vast majority move successfully to employment or further education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>2</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?

Teachers have a clear awareness of the needs of individual students, including those with the most complex needs. Along with classroom assistants, teachers make good use of resources, including information and communication technology, to ensure that learning is enjoyable for all. A good range of communication techniques are used and there is a very effective approach to behaviour management. Students trust the staff and are confident to ask for help. Since the last inspection, staff have been successful in refining students' learning targets and they have also made sure that they are challenging. The current focus is on ensuring that these are always used to best effect. In many lessons staff do this by probing questioning and regular reminders to students about their targets to ensure that, whatever their ability, students are fully involved in reviewing their achievements. As a result, they make good progress. In a few lessons opportunities to challenge students in this way are missed.

The curriculum provides many imaginative opportunities that underpin students' very effective personal development. There are particular strengths in religious education, physical education and information and communication technology and a systematic development of students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The wide range of enrichment activities include many visits, some of which are abroad. In the light of

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students' changing needs, the curriculum now includes specialist provision for those with the most complex needs and there are well thought out plans to refine this provision further.

Excellent care, guidance and support ensure that all aspects of students' personal development are underpinned by rigorous policies and structures as well as very high expectations from each member of staff. The work of the Home School Development Officer is a vital part of this and links with others, including health professionals, are used exceptionally well to enhance the provision. The work of the outreach team is highly valued and forms a vital part of the school's very strong links with other schools, for example in supporting students on the autistic spectrum. Vulnerable students are carefully monitored and, as needed, individually tailored programmes are put in place. Students are closely supported when joining or leaving the school, and are given excellent guidance for the next steps in their educational lives.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The recently established senior leadership team is working very well at driving improvement. These staff are rigorous in their monitoring and are having a positive impact on developing practice in classrooms. Improved systems are in place to track students' progress so that it is now easy to check that they are making the progress of which they are capable. Senior staff are clear where improvement is needed and the professional development of staff is well matched to identified priorities. A very strong emphasis is placed on ensuring equality of opportunity for all students so that any discrimination or inequality is addressed with rigour. Extremely effective systems and procedures are in place to ensure students are safe and secure and students are keen to point out that the staff listen to them and that they feel free from bullying. Arrangements for child protection are implemented rigorously and risk assessments are detailed and thorough. The governing body plays a full and active part in school improvement. It acts effectively to hold the school to account and helps to ensure that the school provides good value for money. Through an audit of the school's contribution to community cohesion, members of the governing body are clear that, even though there is much that is good in this area, particularly at a local level, national and international opportunities are not sufficiently developed.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</b>

## Sixth form

Good leadership has ensured that the provision has developed well to meet students' changing needs so that those of differing abilities make good progress. As in the main school, the leaders are aware that students' learning targets are not always used as rigorously as they might be to challenge all students in lessons and are actively addressing this issue. Even so, the sixth form prepares them well for employment, particularly by helping them gain the confidence needed when meeting new people and going to different places. The curriculum and teaching are effectively focused on equipping students with the skills they need in their daily lives and many learn to travel independently. Students' eyes are opened to the range of options available to them, through college courses and very carefully planned work experience. In addition to gaining a range of relevant accreditation, students benefit from opportunities to explore very personal issues associated with adulthood. This means that they develop their ability to make informed choices about a range of topics. Residential visits provide excellent opportunities for students to practise the independent living skills they learn in school.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2



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## **Views of parents and carers**

About one sixth of parents' and carers' questionnaires were returned. Along with the school's own questionnaires these indicate that parents and carers are overwhelmingly pleased with what the school achieves for their children. Their views are exemplified by the comments such as, 'Little Heath is a wonderful school that my child loves coming to.' Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' positive views and evidence supports that they have every reason to be proud of what their children achieve in this school. The school actively addresses parents' and carers' suggestions, for example, in response to its last questionnaire, it has published its curriculum topic grid.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Heath 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 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 142 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	63	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	58	9	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	54	9	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	63	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	63	8	33	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	58	9	38	1	4	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)	12	50	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	58	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	58	8	33	2	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	50	9	38	3	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	67	8	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	67	8	33	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.**



30 September 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Little Heath School, Romford, RM6 5RX**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school.

Little Heath School gives you a good education where you do well because of the good teaching. Staff care for you extremely well and by the time you leave you get a range of qualifications that help you either get a place at college or a job. We could see that you are gaining confidence and improving in many ways. The staff have high expectations of you and we could see that you try hard. All staff work hard to make sure you are safe and healthy. You are given a very interesting range of things to do, such as going to Paris on the recent residential visit. This sounds great!

The school is well led and managed. The staff are very keen to help you do as well as you can. Therefore, we have asked them to keep reminding you about your learning targets in lessons so that you are fully involved in checking your achievements and, as a result, improve your progress even further. We have also asked the school to develop wider links to help you gain a greater understanding of the lives of other people in the United Kingdom and even further afield.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead inspector

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