

Goldwyn Community Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119042
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358485
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim O'Connor
Headteacher	Bob Law
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed, each taught by a different teacher. Meetings were held with a range of staff, groups of students and the vice-chair of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, such as assessment data, attendance, behaviour and incident logs, and school development planning. The 21 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- the procedures for tracking and analysing students' progress and the use of this information in setting individual students' targets
- the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's behaviour management strategies
- the effectiveness with which the school meets the learning and pastoral needs of the few girls on roll
- the use of information and communication technology in the classroom.

Information about the school

The overwhelming majority of students live in Kent, although a few travel from adjoining local authorities. All students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, although in many cases they have additional needs, such as autism or mental health issues. The large majority of students are boys. Approximately a third of the students are known to be eligible for free school meals. A few are looked-after children. A very large majority of the students have a White British heritage.

The school acquired specialist status for behaviour in July 2010. It received an International School Award recently and it is recognised as an Eco School. There have been developments in the leadership of the school. Following the retirement of the deputy headteacher in 2010, both his replacement and a new assistant headteacher have been appointed.

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

Goldwyn is a good school. Students receive high-quality education and excellent care, support and guidance. The school has good arrangements for safeguarding students and keeping them safe. Consequently, the outcomes for all students are good, including for the few girls in the school. Students make outstanding progress in some aspects of their personal development, such as knowing how to stay safe and to remain healthy. They have very positive attitudes towards the school. Attendance is average and students' behaviour is excellent, reflecting the impact of the school's specialism.

The extensive improvement that students make in their personal development provides a good platform for learning and teachers make good use of the opportunity that this provides. Good teaching promotes rapid learning and so students make good progress and achieve well. Good accommodation and resources encourage students' participation in learning. However, on occasion, teachers use information and communication technology excessively and, at times, inappropriately. Students' attainment is low overall, although a few enter the school working at a level that is broadly average, therefore, there tends to be a wide ability range in classes. While teachers acknowledge this in their planning, not all of them, routinely, provide different activities that match individuals' capabilities in ways that enable them to learn independently. Students are provided with an outstanding curriculum. The breadth of learning opportunities in Years 10 and 11 is matched particularly well to students' interests and aptitudes.

Leaders at all levels carry out their duties well and are very effective in ensuring that staff share a common purpose. The staff are unanimous in confirming that they know what the school is trying to achieve and that their contribution is valued. Good self-evaluation procedures provide leaders with accurate information about the school's strengths and areas for development. These include a raft of procedures for monitoring students' academic and personal progress. While the data sets produced provide a wealth of very detailed information that is used effectively, they are complex and there are too many of them. Despite changes at a senior level, leaders have, successfully, maintained the momentum of improvement that was evident at the time of the previous inspection. While doing so, they have benefited from the wholehearted support of the staff and the input of a good governing body and from outstanding partnerships with schools and other organisations. On the basis of this impressive track record and leaders' proven ability to embed ambition and raise expectations, the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of teaching and learning further by:

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- ensuring that staff, routinely, match activities to students' capabilities in order to promote independent learning and accelerate progress
- rationalising the use of information and communication technology as a teaching tool so that it is not used to the exclusion of other resources which may be more appropriate in the circumstances.
- Simplify the procedures for recording, tracking and reporting on aspects of students' academic and personal progress by:
 - reducing the number and range of data sets so that each one has a clearly defined purpose and unnecessary duplication of information is avoided
 - providing different members of staff with only the information that they need to carry out their responsibilities, in a succinct and concise format.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Staff's consistently very high expectations of students' behaviour, their application of routines and the quality of their interactions with students are the foundation of the very good progress that all groups make in their personal development. Students confirm that they feel safe in school and they talk knowledgeably about potentially dangerous situations and the consequences of making wrong decisions. They are equally articulate when describing circumstances that might put their health at risk, such as the misuse of drugs, and situations that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. The accreditations that they acquire, the work-related learning dimension of the curriculum and improvements in their personal development, such as punctuality and teamwork, prepare students well for leaving school. The school's success is evident in the fact that all school leavers in 2010 went into education, employment or training. Students' willingness to take on responsibility, such as representing others as an elected member on 'Student Voice' or helping to implement the Eco School action plan, are indicative of the good contribution that they make to the school and local communities.

In the lessons observed, students showed good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They grow increasingly aware of the needs of others and become more socially skilled as they develop into more mature young people and competent communicators. This contributes to boys' and girls' ability to learn quickly and make good progress, especially in meeting challenging targets and in consolidating and improving key literacy and numeracy skills. All groups of students perform equally well. Consequently, although attainment on entry to the school is low, students are successful in gaining a range of accreditations. These include BTEC qualifications in vocational areas such as construction and in subjects like music. Students follow GCSE courses also and, in a very small number of cases in 2010, they achieved grade C in subjects such as technology and art and design.

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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	4
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall. Staff have good subject knowledge. Relationships are very good and the school's specialist expertise is evident in the way that skilled staff manage students' behaviour, reducing the impact of any minor disruptions. These are important contributory factors to students' accelerated learning. Teaching assistants provide good support in maintaining students' engagement and in helping to guide their learning. Assessment is used well to support learning and all staff are aware of students' literacy and numeracy targets. They, generally, make good use of this information when preparing learning activities that encourage students to attempt tasks independently or with minimum prompting. However, this good practice is not applied consistently in all lessons. On a few occasions, the activities are not matched sufficiently well to individual students' needs and capabilities. Staff use information and communication technology as a teaching tool extensively, competently and in most instances appropriately. However, occasionally, they use it unnecessarily and this is detrimental to students' learning because it means that other resources which would be more appropriate in that situation are not deployed.

Students receive a very high-quality curriculum that is broad and well balanced. All students, including girls, benefit from very many opportunities to enrich and extend their learning within local, national and international communities. Excellent links with local schools, visits to local places of interest and visitors into school are supplemented extremely well by residential visits, such as for an outdoor education programme. The

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curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is personalised as students pursue individual learning pathways. Detailed discussions towards the end of Year 9 identify students' interests, ambitions and hoped-for career paths and this information informs the curriculum programme that individuals follow. Such very high-quality guidance is indicative of the school's outstanding provision for supporting students' academic and personal growth. Its success lies in the link between its organisation, with each student being allocated to one of four units, and routine tracking of students' performance to check that they are in line to achieve their learning and behavioural targets. Any suspicion that they might be off track triggers intervention procedures, such as 'booster sessions' in literacy, or very effective unit-based support mechanisms. The unit arrangement ensures that the support and guidance are provided by an integrated and well-informed network of people that includes staff, parents and carers and other agencies.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have established good procedures for addressing any form of discrimination and for ensuring equality of opportunity for all learners. Scrutiny of the tracking data of students' learning and behaviours ensures that no individuals or groups of students, such as looked-after children or those known to be eligible for free school meals, are doing less well than others. However, the tracking procedures are over-complicated and the reports produced by leaders are not tailored to individual staff members' requirements by summarising just the information that they need to know to do their job most effectively.

The school's commitment to seeking to remove potential barriers to learning is reflected in its good contribution to promoting community cohesion. The school has good links with parents and carers and it knows their individual circumstances well. Students' understanding of other cultures is developed well through events such as a residential trip to France and a skiing holiday. Their horizons have been extended even further via the school's recent link to a Nigerian school and the introduction of global studies into the timetable.

Effective school self-evaluation informs a detailed development plan that is not over-ambitious and which focuses on priority areas. It reflects leaders' ambition and their drive to secure ongoing improvement. The effective governing body is actively involved in this procedure and it takes this and other opportunities to challenge leaders and hold them to account. It has been a full partner in producing and establishing good safeguarding

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procedures and it monitors their effectiveness, such as by routinely checking records of physical interventions that have had to be applied.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Less than a third of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. They do, however, present a very mixed picture. Most parents and carers who responded are very supportive of the school and appreciate the work that it does. 'We are very pleased with our son's improvement since joining Goldwyn and have confidence in the teaching staff to continue building on the success' and 'we are very impressed with the school and staff particularly in relation to being inclusive' are typical comments. On the other hand, a few parents and carers disagree with most statements about the school. There is no particular single focus for these negative views, but they do indicate that a small group of parents and carers have reservations about the school's effectiveness. Inspectors explored these concerns, but they were not able to substantiate them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Goldwyn Community Special 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	38	11	52	2	10	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	43	9	43	3	14	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	71	5	24	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	33	9	43	3	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	48	9	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	43	9	43	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	33	13	62	1	5	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)	6	29	13	62	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	48	8	38	2	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	48	8	38	2	10	1	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	48	8	38	2	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	52	8	38	2	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	52	7	33	3	14	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



11 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Goldwyn Community Special School, Ashford TN23 3BT

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. Special thanks go to those of you who gave up your time to speak with us. You told us that Goldwyn is a good school and we agree with you.

You make good progress with your work and do well in examinations. This helps to prepare you well for leaving school. We were very impressed with how much you know about how to stay safe and healthy. You are very polite and your behaviour is excellent. Lessons are good and you are given lots of interesting things to do. You get very good opportunities to work with students from other schools and to go on exciting trips, such as to France. The school takes very good care of you and the staff make sure that you are safe. They provide you with a great deal of support.

The people who run the school do a good job. They want to make the school even better and we have asked them to do the following in order to achieve this.

- Make sure that teachers always provide you with work that is set at just the right level so that you can tackle it on your own.
- Find simpler ways of checking how well you are doing with your work and improving your behaviour.

You can help them to make these improvements by carrying on going to school as often as you can, and by continuing to behave so well while you are there.

Finally, we wish each of you success in the future, especially if you are taking examinations and leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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