

# Birkett House Special School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120351
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358741
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Muir HMI

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

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	144
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	19
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rosemary Lowe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Horn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Launceston Road Leicester LE18 2FZ
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<b>Age group</b>	4–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	358741

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<b>Boarding provision</b>	Birkett House
<b>Social care Unique Reference Number</b>	SC001835
<b>Social care inspector</b>	Joanne Vyas

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, one social care inspector and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 20 lessons and 17 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the chair of the governing body and one other governor and several members of staff, including the assistant headteachers leading the sixth form provision and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at various documents, including the school improvement plan, policies and the school's analysis of data and other performance indicators. Questionnaires from 57 parents and carers were returned and analysed.

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

- The accuracy of the school's monitoring of pupil progress in all areas of the school.
- How the school's leadership team ensures that expectations are consistently high across all areas and sites of the school.
- Whether the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, across all key stages, so that they are ready to transfer to the next stage of their lives, especially with regard to their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How robust the records of the monitoring of teaching across the school are.

## Information about the school

Birkett House School educates pupils with pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism and sensory impairment. The school has a residential facility. There are currently two pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is also based on four other sites to allow for enhanced inclusion opportunities. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than the national average. The majority of students are White British with a small minority from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds.

The school has achieved several awards. These include Investors in People, Inclusion Quality Mark and Healthy Schools status.

**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

Birkett House School is a good school. It is outstanding in many areas of its work, including the majority of the Every Child Matters outcomes, the curriculum, and care, guidance and support. The leadership of the school shows excellent vision and drive for improvement. This promotes a common sense of purpose within the school community which is also underpinned by the outstanding links with parents and other partners which contribute to the largely good and sometimes outstanding outcomes. Due to the in-depth knowledge that staff have of the children's needs and abilities, and the good quality of the provision, the Early Years Foundation Stage has many strengths, but is good rather than outstanding because there are limitations on outdoor learning and curriculum flexibility due to the children in this stage being largely taught in the group of Key Stage 1 pupils. This has provided an obstacle to these children receiving the highest quality provision. The senior leadership team of the school is working with the governing body to find ways to overcome these limitations. The sixth form provision is outstanding and this is reflected in the excellent progress which pupils make during their time there. On the different sites where sixth form learning takes place, there is an increasingly wide choice of qualifications and courses to meet the vast range of needs which the school caters for. The boarding provision is good, with several areas which are outstanding (although a small number of National Minimum Standards were not met).

The school's monitoring of the progress of all pupils is comprehensive and shows that pupils make good progress overall. Nearly all make at least the progress expected of them over time, with many exceeding the expected progress. The leadership of the school uses data well to analyse performance and identifies pupils at risk of underachievement. Behaviour is good and is generally managed well by staff. Attendance is low, largely as the result of the complex medical needs which many of the pupils have. The procedures which are in place to promote better attendance are robust and well-founded and have an impact in reducing all types of absence except for those which are the result of medical conditions. Pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and can discuss and demonstrate this by making healthy choices at lunchtime. Many also participate in a range of activities in the curriculum and beyond, which helps them to appreciate the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. Pupils contribute exceptionally well to the school and the wider community and the school is a much appreciated and valued feature of the local community.

Teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding. The better teaching motivates pupils and engages pupils in tasks which build on their interests. Staff mostly judge well when to intervene and when to allow pupils to work more independently, but this is not a consistent feature of teaching. Staff know the pupils well and generally match the work to meet the needs and abilities in the class. However, the planning does not always link the work to individual needs and abilities. The leadership of the school has a clear focus on

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improving teaching and learning and evidence from the school shows that the quality of teaching by individual teachers is improving over time. The curriculum is outstanding and uses the variety of provision available to the school extremely well. Care, guidance and support promote personal outcomes to an outstanding level and pupils receive excellent information, advice and guidance about their future options. As a result, and despite their low attendance, pupils' development of workplace and other skills is outstanding.

Leaders are acutely aware of the school's strengths and its areas for development. They closely monitor all areas of the school's work and evaluate it so that improvement can be effected as early as possible. Due to this and the plans that the school has devised for further improvement, the school has demonstrated that it has good capacity to make sustained improvement.

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

- Accelerate progress for all individuals and groups of students across the college by:
  - ensuring that work is consistently well matched to all pupils' abilities
  - giving more opportunities for pupils to work independently and develop responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - developing outdoor learning so that there can be free flow between the indoor and outdoor curriculum
  - ensuring that the children in this stage have their distinct Early Years Foundation Stage age appropriate needs met.
- The school must ensure that it meets the National Minimum Standards for boarding which have not been met.

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

**2**

Due to the severity and complexity of their special educational needs and/or disabilities, it is inappropriate to judge pupils' attainment overall. During their time in school, pupils mostly make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. This matches the progress which they make in lessons. All groups of pupils make good progress, except the students in the sixth form who make outstanding progress. However, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make slightly less progress than other groups, though still good. Pupils gain a wide range of qualifications according to their needs and none leave school without some form of external accreditation.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Their parents' views support this. Pupil responses through meetings and the survey confirm that they feel safe and that they have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe with respect to their abilities. They also say that they feel well prepared for the next stage of their lives and that they are encouraged to make decisions based on a wide range of information, advice and guidance. Pupils say that bullying is not a concern and that they are well looked after. There are some inconsistencies evident in how well staff encourage pupils to manage their own behaviour. The result is that they are sometimes too reliant on others to control them. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles to an impressive extent. Many

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understand and are able to explain why the food they have chosen is healthy. They are also aware of how activities contribute to their health. Parents also report that pupils encourage them to be more healthy by taking home information which they have learnt in school and explaining it. Pupils have access to high quality information, advice and guidance about what options are available to them when they leave school. The contribution which pupils make to the community is of high quality. Due to the dispersed nature of the school's sites there is a school council for each one. They are fully inclusive, taking pupils from each class group, meaning that all special educational needs and/or disabilities are represented. Pupils are often out in the community as a part of their curriculum and they are made to feel welcome by local shops and services. They are also involved in fundraising activities and events, which they organise, with a proportionate level of support.

*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>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<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?

In the lessons seen, support was well used in most cases to promote more effective learning. On a few occasions, the development of pupils' independence skills was not as effective as it could be due to adults not judging well when to step back to allow pupils time to work through a problem. The best teaching showed that teachers had a very

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detailed knowledge of the pupils and their special education needs and/or disabilities. They also demonstrated excellent subject knowledge and made exceptionally strong links between prior learning, pupils' understanding and the activities that they were undertaking in the lesson. These examples of outstanding teaching led to pupils making outstanding progress in their lessons.

The curriculum is impressively varied, having the use of five separate sites and a very large variety of courses which range from ASDAN (Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) to suit pupils working at P levels, through to students who are attaining high enough to pass GCSEs. In all key stages, the balance between the promotion of personal and academic outcomes ensures that, as pupils travel through the school, they are increasingly well equipped, so that by the time they reach sixth form they make outstanding progress. The school has also devised a curriculum map to provide a clear curriculum well suited to the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. It builds on the National Curriculum, but is well adapted to enhance learning opportunities and minimise obstacles to learning for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding due to the plans which are in place for pupils. Where appropriate, pupils have a healthcare plan, feeding programmes, physiotherapy programmes and communication and personal care plans. These reflect strong multi-agency input. As a result, all staff dealing with pupils have a full understanding of their needs. Parents and pupils are also involved in compiling the plans and programmes. Opportunities for pupils to make choices about the next stage of the lives are provided through visits to placements, liaison with parents, and a strong partnership with the Connexions service. As a result, pupils are able to express their views and are extremely well supported in making choices for their future.

*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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The school has developed a strong community identity across the sites and there is a common sense of purpose based on high expectations for all pupils and staff. The leadership team work very successfully to promote high expectations for teachers and, over time, the quality of practice of individual teachers improves due to the input of the management of the school. The school councils demonstrate the inclusive ethos of the school, which promotes equality of opportunity. This is the starting point and focus of the school's work in ensuring that all groups of pupils make good progress. The school's work on community cohesion is good as there is a strong awareness of the context of the school and an informal understanding of how its work has an impact on the various



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groups within the school. However, the school has not formally measured the full impact of its work in this area.

An impressive wealth of partnerships supports the school's work in educating pupils and promoting their personal development. The school's safeguarding procedures and policies, including child protection, are good in all aspects and show that all adults working with pupils are appropriately recruited and vetted. The role of the governing body in challenging the performance of the school is well targeted and improving. The recent restructuring of the committee structure has also enabled them to provide more focus on the different areas of the school.

*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>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>2</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>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Standards are low on entry due to the children's special educational needs and/or disabilities and they remain low throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children in this stage enjoy their lessons because the activities are well planned and the teaching is good. Teaching staff are skilled in observing and recording the learning taking place for children. Progress in lessons is good, which matches the progress over time evident through the school's data and tracking. Planning and assessment are good and meet the needs of all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The quality of the curriculum is good, being carefully matched to meet the needs of all children. However, the limitations on the outdoor space provide some barriers to learning outside. There is a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities, although on occasions, this is inconsistent due to some instances of over support by adults which prevent children from developing their independence skills as quick as they might. Very good relationships and well planned support mean that opportunities for learning and developing social skills are

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good. This is also supported by the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage being taught alongside the pupils in Key Stage 1.

The liaison with feeder nurseries ensures a smooth transition in to school. Provision is further enhanced by partnerships with other professionals, including speech and language therapists and physiotherapists. The Early Years Foundation Stage leadership has a good understanding of the strengths of the department and how it can improve to meet the needs of the children.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Sixth form

The sixth form is outstanding in all areas of its work. Students have a wide range of course available, which are individually tailored to meet their needs and abilities exceptionally well. The two sites on which the sixth form is located promote a variety of curriculum opportunities which meet the needs of all pupils extremely well. The sixth form is a very well-planned and executed provision providing an increasing array of accredited courses. The experiences provided offer realistic qualifications and opportunities to enhance students' prospects of further success when they leave school.

All sixth form lessons seen during the inspection were of a high quality, promoting good progress and matching very well the wide range of needs, abilities and interests of pupils.

The school plans extremely well for transition. The good quality information, advice and guidance, and effective links with local colleges provide a sound base from which students are able to move to the next stage of their lives. The school has a strong tradition of all of its students moving on to the next stage of full-time education, with no students being NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

*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

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## Boarding provision

The quality of the boarding at this school is good. The majority of the national minimum standards are met, with a significant number exceeded. There were no recommendations contained in the previous report. However, there are four recommendations made in this report with regard to medication, privacy, record keeping and staff support.

This school currently provides boarding for 57 students. Students board on a part-time basis, spending the majority of their time with their parents or carers. Students spend one or two nights in residence every two to six weeks. The school's ethos and underpinning philosophy is strong throughout, ensuring students who board are in a supportive and caring community within which they are valued and safe. Boarders develop good relationships with each other and with staff. They enjoy boarding.

Staff actively promote the health of boarders. They are suitably trained in first aid and accidents are few and far between. Staff have good procedures for the safe management of medication and have received training. However, not all procedures are properly implemented such as handling tablets without the use of gloves. This practice is unhygienic and may give rise to cross infection. The school has close working links with physiotherapists, continence nurses, a dietician and speech and language therapists. Additionally, they employ a qualified school nurse who works in partnership with care, education and parents to promote the health of students. There are lots of opportunities for boarders to take part in physical activities on and off site. The school provides a varied diet which caters for the individual needs of the students. Boarders have an active say in what goes on the menu, food is sourced locally and meals are cooked from fresh ingredients. Boarders enjoy healthy food.

The safety and rights of both staff and boarders are protected. Staff are competent in their knowledge of the school's safeguarding procedures. They recognise when boarders are unhappy. Boarders said staff are good at listening. Staff take their concerns seriously and resolve issues where possible. The privacy of boarders is respected in most areas. However, medication is given in communal areas when some students may prefer more privacy. Staff have a good knowledge of the bullying policy and bullying is dealt with immediately. Bullying is not an issue due to the high staffing levels and the way boarding is organised. Staff also carry out work with boarders to help them understand and accept difference. Staff know what to do if students go missing but this has not occurred as the school is secure and there are good procedures in place when students are in the community. There are good health and safety procedures in place.

Staff view students positively and there is a relaxed, family atmosphere in boarding. Boarding staff have all received training in physical intervention but rarely use it. Staff said they prefer to talk to the student to help them to relax. Physical intervention is carried out for the right reasons and in the right way. Behaviour that challenges is managed competently and professionally. Individual support is detailed in each boarder's file. Observations and discussions with staff showed that staff ensure each boarder's individual needs and aspirations are fully addressed. Staff know the boarders very well. However, boarders' records, such as their care plans and personal learning plans, are not kept up-to-date. Therefore, new staff may refer to information that is no longer relevant to the boarder. Additionally, although boarders' achievements are clearly celebrated by staff, these are not recognised within the certificates of achievement boarders have acquired as they have not received any for some time.

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Staff work closely with education staff and parents to provide a positive approach to education and promote its value for boarders. Staff organise educational activities for students to complete when they stay in residence. Students also have clear and achievable targets which they work on each time they stay. These include targets such as basic hygiene skills, cooking and shopping. Boarders are accommodated within an area designated for residence within the school. There is a homely environment with high quality furnishings, which include furniture suitable for students with physical disabilities. Although communal space is an issue as it is small, it is well utilised. However, all areas are well adapted to ensure all students can access communal areas and take part in the organised activities. For example, kitchen work surfaces and the washing up sink are adjustable to accommodate students in wheelchairs. The recent refurbishment, although not fully completed, provides a high standard of accommodation. Bedrooms are all single and personalised with artwork that students have completed and sensory items such as light changing balls and 'rainbow in a room'. Boarders also have access to the multi-sensory suite and soft play room. The home is clean and tidy and well maintained. The grounds, including a sensory garden, provide safe play.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. Boarders receive an individual service which is designed to meet their personal needs. Staff work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure a high quality service where the ethos is centred around meeting the individual needs and aspirations of boarders.

The school leadership team has a strong commitment to improving practice and ensuring the quality of the service provided. Staff are qualified, caring, professional and competent. They feel well supported by each other and the school leadership team. However, staff have only received one formal supervision a term for the last year and none so far this term. There is a clear induction process for new staff, which includes guidance on safeguarding procedures as well as other school policies and procedures. There are currently vacancies within the residential team. This has meant that the management team within residence are working more shifts to cover the vacant posts and the residence is closed for one night a week. They are also using a high proportion of school staff to maintain their staffing levels, which means school staff are working long hours. Although this has had no impact on the outcomes for children so far, it has meant monitoring systems, reviews of care planning, keeping boarders records up-to-date and staff supervision have not been maintained. The school leadership team is well aware of these issues and have a plan in place to address the staffing structure and vacancies. They believe this will ensure they maintain a high quality boarding team which will provide a high quality service to boarders.

**National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care**

- Breach of NMS 14.17: ensure there is a policy and written guidance which is implemented in practice for the administration of medication.
- Breach of NMS 3.2: ensure the school provides procedural guidelines to staff on privacy covering intimate personal care for disabled children, including administering medication and invasive clinical procedures.

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- Breach of NMS 17.1: ensure the care plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development.
- Breach of NMS 30: ensure all staff receive at least one and a half hours one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term.

*These are the grades for the boarding provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the boarding provision</b>	<b>2</b>
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## **Views of parents and carers**

The large majority of parents and carers gave responses which were overwhelmingly positive in all areas. The responses and comments generally reflected the inspectors' judgements. A typical comment from a parent, about their son's education was: 'The curriculum he follows suits his needs very well and ensures that he has become a happy and confident young man. The staff are all very dedicated.' The findings of the inspection support the positive view of parents and carers.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Birkett House 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 144 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	75	12	21	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	45	79	11	19	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	67	18	32	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	65	17	30	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	45	79	11	19	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	65	19	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	60	22	39	0	0	1	2
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)	31	54	21	37	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	74	13	23	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	68	15	26	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	70	14	25	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	70	16	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	79	10	18	1	2	1	2

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.**



15 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Birkett House Special School, Leicester, LE18 2FZ**

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your college recently, I would like to thank you very much for making our visit very interesting and enjoyable.

We found that your school is a good school. The headteacher, leadership team and staff all work very hard to make your time in school successful. Your personal development is a strength of the school, in particular the way you adopt healthy lifestyles and the work that you do within the local community. You also make good progress in the work that you do in lessons. The care, guidance and support which you receive are outstanding. Your behaviour is good, although sometimes you rely too much on adults to control your behaviour rather than doing it for yourselves. You have good attitudes to learning and you should all be proud of the contribution you make to the school.

I have asked the school to improve two areas so it can be better than it is now.

Improve progress for all individuals and groups of pupils across the school by:

- ensuring that work is consistently well matched to all of your abilities
- giving you more opportunities to work independently and develop responsibility for your own learning.

Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:

- developing outdoor learning so that there can be free flow between the indoor and outdoor curriculum
- ensuring that the children in this stage have their distinct Early Years Foundation Stage age appropriate needs met.

You can all help with this, by using the school council to tell the teachers what you like best about school and what makes you even more interested in learning than you are already.

Yours sincerely

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

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