

# Horizon School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100311
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	354832
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stuart 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
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Diggins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kt Khan (interim)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Wordsworth Road Hackney N16 8BZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons covering 12 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the school improvement partner, a representative of the local authority, staff and pupils. The work of the school was observed and inspectors scrutinised the school improvement plan, the minutes of the leadership team and governing body meetings, a range of other documentation and 16 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The management structures at all levels to determine their effectiveness in ensuring quality provision for all pupils.
- The effectiveness of the systems to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- How well the curriculum planning provides a balance between meeting the very wide range of pupils' needs and their entitlement to an appropriate mix of academic, vocational and work-related provision.
- The impact of care, guidance and support on the outcomes for pupils to encourage good behaviour and attendance.
- The effectiveness of the systems to judge attainment on entry, set challenging targets and track pupils' progress to ensure that all make the progress of which they are capable.

## Information about the school

Horizon School caters for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, mainly related to severe learning difficulties and/or autistic spectrum disorders. All these pupils have additional complex behavioural and communication difficulties. A very small minority have moderate learning difficulties. Pupils are taught in three 'needs' groups, each focused on one of these areas of difficulty. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds which reflect the local area. The majority are of Black African or Black Caribbean origin, with minorities from Asian and Turkish or Kurdish backgrounds. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Sportsmark awards. Since the last inspection, the school has been led by three headteachers. The school will merge with another special school in the local authority on the existing site within the next two years. The current interim headteacher has recently been appointed to the headship of this new school. There have been other changes in the senior management team, with an acting deputy headteacher for the last two years and the personnel on the governing body have changed, including a new chair.

**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

Horizon School provides good education for its pupils. Since the appointment of the interim headteacher, it has improved rapidly and continues to do so. The care, guidance and support provided by all staff are excellent so that pupils make very substantial gains in developing their communication skills, their confidence and self-esteem. After the previous inspection, the school went through a very difficult period, during which the needs of pupils changed significantly and the performance of the school declined. In the last two years, a thorough revision of staffing and a radical overhaul of the senior leadership team, supported by a comprehensive training programme for all staff, have turned the school round. Now the overwhelming majority of pupils make at least good progress in their academic learning and for many, progress is excellent. Pupils contribute extremely well to the school and the wider community and indicate that the school's excellent safeguarding procedures provide a secure environment. The school has very good systems in place which are effective in promoting attendance and encouraging punctuality so that attendance overall is good. Behaviour is also good and parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school and the positive effect it has on their children.

The curriculum is well balanced and gives a clear focus to the development of pupils' social and independent life skills. They value highly the wide range of opportunities for physical activities and a good number explained how they have changed their lifestyle and become more health conscious. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers establish excellent relationships with the pupils and these are the basis of the exemplary guidance and support for pupils' personal development. The staff know each pupil well and use this knowledge effectively to address pupils' personal needs. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not use this information to best effect to adapt their teaching to maximise the academic progress made by each pupil.

The interim headteacher provides a very clear vision about how the provision should develop. In communicating this to staff, she is well supported by her senior leadership team. Together they have established a stable staffing base, mapped out a clear path for improvement based on accurate and honest self-evaluation and developed very effective teamwork across the teaching, support and administrative staff. Effective systems to determine attainment on entry, set challenging targets and monitor pupils' progress for each of the needs groups in the school have been developed and these provide high quality information which gives a clear overview of the school's performance. The school recognises that the strand leaders are still developing their skills to enable them to play a more active role in monitoring and evaluating the provision in their areas. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has undergone considerable changes in personnel, including the appointment of a new chair. These changes, and others to its systems and structures, have enabled it to refine its skills so that it now acts effectively to support and challenge the school's leadership. The school's work with parents and carers

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is good and partnerships with other professionals are used extremely well to promote pupils' needs and well-being. The improvements which the school has effected on pupils' achievement, their behaviour and attitudes to learning during a period when it has taken on pupils with a much wider range of needs, and the effectiveness of its self-evaluation show that the capacity for further sustained improvement is good.

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

- Ensure that in all lessons, teachers clearly show how they will adapt their teaching to maximise the progress made by each pupil.
- Make greater use of the 'strand' leaders in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of provision in their areas.

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

**2**

All pupils gain nationally recognised qualifications which are well matched to their needs and aspirations. Given their very low starting points on entry, this represents at least good progress and achievement. There are no differences in the progress made by pupils with different needs or between genders or different ethnic groups. The very wide range of communication strategies used consistently in all lessons ensures that pupils make very good progress in developing these skills. In an excellent communication lesson for Year 7 pupils, the teacher used a very wide range of teaching styles and strategies to ensure that the learning needs of each individual were fully met. However, such exemplary practice is not consistently evident in all lessons.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is based on the high expectations established by all staff and the role models they present to pupils. Pupils develop an excellent awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and this is recognised through the Healthy Schools award. Pupils explained how they learn to keep fit both through timetabled physical education lessons and by participating in out-of-school activities. All feel safe and many explained how much this increases their enjoyment of school.

The school's first day absence procedures are operated with rigour but sympathetically by the administrative staff. These have enabled attendance rates to be considerably improved. A strong feature of the provision is the way in which pupils are challenged to manage their own behaviour, and they all have made significant improvement since they first started at the school. Pupils make a positive contribution to their immediate community through the school council, mentoring of younger pupils by the older ones, fund-raising activities, visits to old people's homes to care for residents and involvement in community events such as those at Hackney Empire Theatre. Activities for Children in Need and Red Nose Day are highlights in the school calendar. The literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology qualifications pupils achieve, together with the gains in their personal skills, prepare them well for life when they leave the school.

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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>2</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?

The very supportive relationships established by staff with their pupils are strengthened through individual mentoring and tutorial sessions. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and in their planning they always identify the needs of each individual. However, in a few lessons, this does not extend to showing clearly the teaching approaches they will use to maximise each pupils' learning. Generally teachers use resources, particularly interactive whiteboard technology, very well to interest and engage pupils. In most lessons, the range of activities is very well matched to pupils' needs, especially in art, food technology and information and communication technology.

Since the previous inspection, the school has radically overhauled its curriculum to give a good balance between academic, vocational and work-related opportunities. This now meets the significantly changed needs of pupils. It also sets a very firm base for the move into the new building, where the changes can be exploited to the full. Pupils are able to access a much wider range of qualifications than in the past, and these prepare them well for life when they leave school.

◆ Staff make sure that all pupils, including those who arrive at different times, settle quickly and happily into life in the various aspects of the school's provision. Transition

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arrangements for those moving into the school and for those who move to other schools and colleges are very good and contribute extremely well to reducing pupils' anxieties. The care, guidance and support provided by all staff for pupils' personal development are outstanding. Staff spend a great deal of time listening to pupils, giving them advice and promoting their well-being to overcome difficulties in their personal circumstances. They are given excellent guidance about careers and opportunities available when they leave the school.

*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 interim headteacher has reinvigorated the school. She leads by example and gives a clear sense of direction to its work, ensuring that the management structures at all levels ensure good quality provision. The very effective working partnership with the new senior leadership team has enabled them to ensure that improvements have taken place in classroom practice and that everyone is clear about what needs to be done for the provision to improve further. Staff approach key developments enthusiastically, for example the introduction of vocational and work-related programmes in Key Stage 4. The changes in personnel on the governing body have enabled it to include a wider range of skills, particularly in terms of financial management. Streamlining its operational systems and structures has enabled it to be much more effective in supporting and challenging the school's leadership and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

An extremely strong feature of the provision is the links which have been established with other professionals, particularly the speech and language therapists, which are extremely effective in developing the skills of pupils. The school's partnership with parents and carers ensures that they can be fully involved in their children's education if they so wish. There are plans in place to make more use of the school's website once confidentiality issues have been addressed. Through its work, the school challenges all aspects of discrimination effectively and ensures that all pupils have the opportunities they need to succeed in their lives after school.

Safeguarding and child protection are now top priority on everyone's agenda and fully meet national requirements and guidelines. Risk assessments are a particular strength, being thorough and detailed. The school uses excellent links at local level with social services and the youth offending teams and in a wider context with various national organisations such as the National Autistic Society to very effectively promote community cohesion. However, as yet there are only a few opportunities for pupils to learn about life for those who live in other countries.

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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>2</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>2</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>

## Views of parents and carers

About one fifth of parents and carers returned their questionnaires, which is somewhat below the average expected for special schools. The school's own data were used to provide a clearer picture of their opinions. An overwhelming majority are very supportive of the school and how it helps both themselves and their children. As one said, 'The school team have worked extremely hard with my child and they have made learning fun and memorable for all.' The inspection findings clearly show that the very few negative comments do not accord with the overall good education and excellent care support and guidance that all pupils receive at Horizon School.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Horizon 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 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 80 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	47	6	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	10	67	4	27	1	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	40	6	40	2	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	40	6	40	3	20	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	47	6	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	40	5	33	2	13	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	40	6	40	1	7	1	7
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	33	7	47	1	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	40	6	40	1	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	40	7	47	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	27	8	53	1	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	47	7	47	1	7	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	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](http://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"><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.**



14 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Horizon School, London N16 8BZ**

We really enjoyed coming to inspect your school. You helped us by letting us see your lessons and look at your work.

Horizon is a good school.

We could see how happy you are at school and how you look forward to coming every day. The school keeps you safe and there is always someone to help and look after you. You really enjoyed working the rowing machines and going on shopping trips. You all behave extremely well.

To make things even better, we want staff to make sure that in every lesson, their teaching is even more closely matched to helping you to improve. We have also asked the strand leaders to give more help to the headteacher and her management team in running the school.

I hope all of you will help staff by doing your best all the time you are in school.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton Lead inspector

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