

# Durants School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	102066
<b>Local authority</b>	Enfield
<b>Inspection number</b>	376664
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Bob Pugh

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>	8–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	88
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	12
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sylvia Hart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter De Rosa
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29–30 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	4 Pitfield Way Enfield  EN3 5BY
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8804 1980
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8804 0976
<b>Email address</b>	office3@durants.enfield.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	8–19
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	21–22 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	376664



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Bob Pugh

Additional inspector

Mary Geddes

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by 11 teachers, amounting to almost six hours of lesson observation time; in five of these lessons, inspectors were joined by school leaders. Meetings were held with school leaders and managers, members of the governing body, a parent, staff including therapists, and students. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including the school's development plan, its self-evaluation reports, and students' work and progress files. Inspectors viewed a PowerPoint presentation which demonstrated the range of activities undertaken by students in the sixth form. Fifty-seven parents and carers made their views known to the inspectors by returning questionnaires.

## Information about the school

Durants School is an average size special school. The headteacher has been in post for three years. Since the last inspection, the school has moved from providing for students who have a range of special needs to one where all students have an autistic spectrum disorder. In addition, a sixth form has been opened at the school. Most students also experience speech, language and communication difficulties, and all have statements of special educational needs. There are three times more boys at the school than girls. A much higher number of students than the national average come from backgrounds other than White British and many live in homes where English is spoken as an additional language. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also higher than the national average. A very few are in the care of the local authority.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Durants is a good school. The sixth form is good, although relatively new. The students achieve well because of good teaching, their outstanding behaviour, and the ambition and drive of school leaders and managers at all levels which is raising standards in all areas of the school’s work. The school is not outstanding because in some lessons there is not a sufficient emphasis on the individual needs of students to make teaching overall outstanding.
- Students, including those in the sixth form, achieve well. They make good progress, almost all of the time, in developing important communication and numeracy skills, which helps to prepare them well for the next stages of their lives.
- Students behave extremely well in lessons and all around the school campus. Very many make excellent improvements in their behaviour during their time at the school because of the highly effective planning, support and guidance provided by members of staff.
- Teaching is good. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of students, and they use their detailed understanding of students’ knowledge and skills to plan lessons which are interesting and challenging. In a very few lessons, teaching is less effective because there is too much whole-class teaching, and opportunities are missed for setting out learning targets clearly and gauging how much each individual has learned.
- School leaders, including the governing body, are extremely ambitious for the school. They support and challenge each other and all members of staff in equal measure to ensure that there is a concerted focus on improvement. School leaders have used performance management well to improve the quality of teaching and support to its current standard. Parents and carers are full of praise for the school and share the vision of its leaders and staff.

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

- By April 2013, ensure that teachers and school leaders have even better information about how well students are doing in each lesson by:
  - ensuring that learning targets are set for individual students in all lessons and are regularly checked on by teachers.
- Provide opportunities for further development of language and communication skills by ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to work with each other and with staff in small groups in all lessons.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The achievement of students including those in the sixth form is good. Although attainment remains low, students make good progress irrespective of their special educational needs or disabilities. They make better progress than similar students nationally. All groups of students achieve equally well because learning is tailored to meet their needs. This includes students who are not from White British backgrounds and live in homes where English is spoken as an additional language. Evidence and data also indicate that progress is equally good for students that are eligible for free school meals and the small number of students who are in the care of the local authority. There is no discernible difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Parents and carers believe that their children make good progress while at the school, and inspection findings bear out this view. One parent commented that her child has 'made fantastic progress and is developing into a young man whose needs are continuously being met'. Students make good progress in developing their language and communication in most lessons because they have good opportunities to interact. However, in a very few lessons, the rate of progress is slower because there is too much whole-class teaching and the individual needs of students are not fully met through smaller, more focused group discussions with each other or with staff. However, some students have developed such good communication and life skills that they are able to chair meetings of the student council and take the lead in games during lessons, directing the work of others. In one English lesson, students showed how well they can read, and both asked and answered questions about the story which they were clearly enjoying. Older students have learned good vocational skills so that, with some support from their teachers, they can run a cafe for other students and staff, using their good number and communication skills very effectively to take orders, collect money and give change.

Students make equally good progress in mathematics and in English. They make good use of their number skills in other curriculum areas, for example accurately counting beats during drumming sessions and dance lessons. Some students are able to evaluate their own work at the end of a lesson, choosing whether their progress has been good, satisfactory or not so good. At break and lunchtimes, students demonstrate how well their social skills have developed since coming to the school.

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Many have learned the rules of games such as football and others have learned safe practices when riding bicycles.

### **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers believe that their children are being well taught, and the inspectors' findings, together with students' own opinions, support that view. One parent commented, 'I am very grateful to the teachers with their wonderful skills and knowledge which has helped my daughter with her communication skills.' Parents and carers agreed that teachers help them to support their child to develop new skills at home, because of the good communication which exists between home and school. The quality of teaching throughout the school is mostly good and there are small pockets of outstanding teaching where teachers use a range of techniques and strategies to very good effect to totally challenge and engage the students from start to finish of the lesson. In many lessons, teachers give students effective advice about what they will each learn during the lesson. Here, students are also well supported by teaching assistants who ensure that the main points of the lesson are understood by every individual. There is a small amount of teaching which is satisfactory; in these lessons, too much time is taken up with teaching to the whole group and insufficient attention is paid to the setting of individual learning targets for students which are then checked up on during and at the end of the lesson.

The curriculum is effectively planned to provide flexibility. Teachers combine their understanding of which approach to use with their well-developed subject knowledge to ensure that students have the best chance of learning well in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers use Makaton signing to strengthen students' understanding, and symbols and photographs for those who need that level of help. A good example of this could be seen in a lesson where younger students were preparing for a visit to a local airfield. The teacher carefully set out the sequence of events of the day by signing the key words. She used the interactive whiteboard to display photographs to prompt understanding and, with well-targeted support from teaching assistants, she ensured that each individual completed a personal sentence strip to serve as a reminder of what would happen next. In such lessons, feedback about how well they are doing is given to students quickly and in a form that they understand. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed because teachers build on assembly themes well in lessons; for example, by reinforcing learning about Hindu culture and religion during a religious education lesson. The school's therapists make a significant contribution to good teaching; one accurately described their role as being to 'enable students to access learning'.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students settle well into the routines of the school because of the highly effective induction programmes. Together with their parents and carers, students are very positive about behaviour and safety in the school. Inspection findings judge the behaviour and safety of students at school as outstanding. Students enjoy and participate fully in lessons which are rarely interrupted. School records confirmed the

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high quality of behaviour over time. On those occasions when students need extra support to manage behaviour, this is provided calmly and efficiently, so that learning is not disrupted. The extent to which many students have learned to manage their own behaviour is notable, and comes as a result of excellent planning and effective intervention from staff with full cooperation from parents and carers.

Students expressed no concerns with regard to any form of bullying. Students who were able to do so, told inspectors that they know who to ask for help if they are worried or concerned, and that help is provided quickly and sensitively. There are hardly any recorded incidents of bullying in recent years. Records show that any such incidents are dealt with effectively. Inspectors observed extremely positive relationships between staff and students during recreation times, which added to the sense of safety and a relaxed atmosphere. Students say that they enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in their very high attendance rates.

### **Leadership and management**

There is strong evidence that school leaders and managers have acted quickly and effectively to drive up achievement since the last inspection. Previous weaknesses in teaching have mostly been addressed by regular monitoring of performance and precise feedback on performance, although the school acknowledges that further work needs to be done to take teaching to the next level. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, strongly promote equality of opportunity. Discrimination, of any kind, is not tolerated. Progress is checked regularly by senior staff to ensure that all individuals and groups are doing as well as they possibly can. The progress made since the last inspection reflects a clear and shared ambition to succeed. Staff are full of praise for the well-tailored professional development opportunities which exist, and in particular, for the opportunities provided at the school to work in partnership with therapists and health professionals. They are clear that, as a result of working so closely with these colleagues, they arrive at an even better understanding of the needs and conditions of their students. Communication with parents and carers is very effective, and there is clear evidence that their views are taken into account, not only about their child's learning and progress, but also about the general direction in which the school is travelling.

Improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection mean that students are provided with learning experiences which are well suited to their individual needs and aspirations, and promote their spiritual, social, cultural and moral development well. The school is innovative in its use of information technology to introduce students to a wide range of music and its cultural associations. There are many opportunities for developing understanding of the local and wider community, ranging from practising their money handling skills in local shops to enjoying 'taster' days at the further education college. The new sixth form is rapidly developing into a high quality unit, though there is, as yet, insufficient evidence to confirm outcomes of achievement as outstanding.

School leaders and the governing body ensure arrangements for safeguarding are

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very secure. All staff and governors undergo regular training on child protection, safe recruitment and dealing with commonly occurring medical needs of students. The school's record of improvement since the last inspection, especially the improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum, have resulted in students achieving higher attainment, showing that the school has the capacity to improve further.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



23 March 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Durants School, Enfield EN3 5BY**

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and looking at your work. Special thanks to those of you who came to meet us to talk about your progress and to give us your views about the school. You told us that you particularly like the opportunities for taking part in music and dance, and that staff are friendly and helpful. We certainly enjoyed the music and dance lessons that we saw.

We think that your school has improved in many ways since the last inspection. It is a good school, where you are taught well and you achieve well. There are many interesting activities for you to take part in and you enjoy your time at school. We were pleased to note that your behaviour around the school site is of such a high standard.

Your headteacher and staff, along with the school governors, have worked hard to improve your school and I have asked them to do two things to make the school even better.

- To make sure that in all lessons learning targets are set for you and that your progress is regularly checked by your teachers.
- To provide you with more opportunities to talk about your work and to share your ideas with your classmates and staff in lessons.

Please keep working hard and helping and supporting each other.

Yours sincerely

Bob Pugh  
Lead inspector

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