

# George Hastwell School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112467
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	363793
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Austin HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	82
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Linda Kitchin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Bernard Gummett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2010
<b>School address</b>	Moor Tarn Lane Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 3LW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by seven teachers, as well as holding meetings with senior staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, the school council, and a group of post-16 students. They observed the school's work and looked at policies and procedures for safeguarding students, the development plan, minutes of the governing body's meetings, local authority reports and the school's monitoring records. Questionnaires completed by 22 parents and carers, 13 staff and 45 students were analysed.

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

- The school's policies and procedures for safeguarding students were investigated to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet requirements.
- The impact of individual targets and regular reviews of learning on improving students' rates of progress was examined.
- The suitability of indoor and outdoor provision for the youngest children was evaluated.

## Information about the school

George Hastwell School educates students who have a statement of special educational needs for severe or profound and complex learning difficulties. The majority experience impairments to communication and some have autistic spectrum disorders. Almost all students are White British and approximately 25% are girls. The proportion known to be entitled to free school meals is high. Students join the school at any point in their academic career and almost all continue into the sixth form. Currently one student is dual registered with another school. At present there are no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has gained the Healthy School status as well as the Sportsmark and Artsmark.

In May 2010 the school was inspected and given a notice to improve.

**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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a good school and a harmonious community where the outstanding care, guidance and support for students are the bedrock. Students enjoy coming to school and behave well because of the excellent care they receive and the very positive relationships they have with staff. Staff have a detailed knowledge of each students' needs so support for their personal development and learning is individually tailored. As a consequence, with good teaching students make good progress in their learning, in developing personal and communication skills, and in contributing to the school community. Their progress is facilitated by the very effective support of teaching assistants and the good curriculum. As part of the commitment to equal opportunities, the school strives to ensure students can engage in a very wide range of experiences to enrich their learning and development, so anything from cheerleading to outdoor pursuits is on the agenda. The school's outstanding partnerships draw on a very wide range of specialist support for students' care, as well as extending curricular opportunities considerably. This is evident in the outstanding sixth form provision. Outcomes for these students are outstanding because the carefully constructed programmes enable each of them to develop independence and a range of pertinent skills in line with their capabilities.

The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully embedded an ethos of outstanding care in the school and gained the commitment of the staff to this over a sustained period. Liaison with parents and carers is central to this and an outstanding feature of the school's work. Leaders and managers have a largely realistic view of the school's performance and through clear planning are seeking to improve this further. However, the school's accountability systems are not fully robust. This is because the management information available lacks detail in some respects, particularly with regard to students' progress over time. The school is in the process of establishing a tracking system which needs to be embedded fully to address this. In addition, the monitoring of lessons focuses more strongly on teaching than on students' learning, so missing opportunities for improvement.

Senior leaders, along with the governing body, have addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection rigorously and put in place robust mechanisms for monitoring safeguarding policies and procedures regularly. Along with the school's current performance, this demonstrates that the school has good capacity to improve and provides good value for money.

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

- Increase accountability through enhancing the school's strategic view of its effectiveness by:
  - - establishing fully the recently introduced system for tracking students' progress towards their individual learning targets
  - - sharpening the focus of lesson observations on students' learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students' starting points and lengths of stay at the school vary considerably. Regardless of this, they make good gains in their learning and personal development because staff are skilled at analysing their needs and planning the incremental steps required for them to meet their targets and make progress. An unrelenting emphasis on raising students' self-esteem and confidence helps reduce some of the barriers to learning. The use of symbols, pictures, gestures and signing as part of the 'total communication approach' expands students' communication repertoire and so enhances their learning. In the main, students are enthusiastic learners and enjoy activities in lessons. Given the nature of their special educational needs, it is not appropriate to make comparisons with national data relating to students' attainment.

Behaviour is good and students say that they feel very safe. The use of restorative practices has had a positive impact, helping students to reflect on occasions when their behaviour has not been good and develop an awareness of the impact of their actions on others. Rates of attendance are broadly average. Students have lots of support to adopt healthy lifestyles. All classes grow their own fruit and vegetables in the school garden and the healthy tuckshop offers attractive choices. The termly newspaper produced by the sixth form includes healthy recipes. These are examples of the variety of good contributions students make to the school community. They are all very well represented by the school council, which contributes to decisions ranging from the new school bus to playground equipment to plasma screens. Students' awareness of the needs of others is developed well through their fundraising for local, national and international charities. The wide range of cultural experiences provided for students in school and beyond through the school's many partnerships enhances this aspect of their development. Through such activities, as well as their good progress in lessons, students are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

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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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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:	3
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	
<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?

Overall teaching is good. Good relationships are a feature of all lessons, with adults providing good role models. In the better lessons, assessment is fine tuned so that activities are very closely matched to the needs of individual students. Appropriate equipment and carefully planned support maximise learning. Teaching assistants provide good support for students' learning while encouraging their independence as much as possible. New technologies are used effectively to stimulate students' interest, foster their participation and develop their skills. Students are encouraged to assess their own progress and to record what they have learned each day in their learning diaries so that they can see their progress towards their targets. Where lessons are less successful, students' interest is not captured well at the outset. There is a lack of precision about what is to be learned which slows the pace, so time is not always used well.

The good curriculum is built around broad areas of learning for younger pupils, moving to discrete subjects at appropriate points for older students. It is carefully tailored to meet the needs of each individual. Developing students' communication, personal and social skills plays a central role. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that students know how to stay safe in daily life, for instance, when using the internet. The youngest pupils are increasingly benefiting from access to the new Early Years Foundation Stage style

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provision which matches their needs. They are encouraged and supported in making choices about activities, which is promoting their personal development effectively. The curriculum is extended and enriched through a wide range of partnerships with other schools, colleges, organisations and charities. Hence, students are able to participate in design technology, work with heavy horses and go horse riding. An array of activities is provided to expand students' horizons and respond to their interests. Students are enthusiastic about the residential opportunities for outdoor pursuits and some have recently enjoyed a holiday abroad.

The excellent care, guidance and support for learners underpin all aspects of the school's work. This is a close community. All staff, in whatever role, are dedicated to the welfare of the students and know them extremely well. Teaching assistants are a much valued part of class teams and their contribution is central to meeting individual students' needs. The school works very closely with a wide range of agencies and therapists to support all students. Arrangements for transitions are well considered and sensitive to students' needs and anxieties. There are very thorough procedures to promote better attendance.

*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 strong sense of moral purpose set by the headteacher and deputy headteacher pervades the work of the school. It is shared by staff, whose commitment to increasing their understanding of the needs of their students is evident in their extensive continuing professional development. All are united in the drive to secure the personal development, learning and independence of which each student is capable. Suitable management systems are in place and increasingly opportunities for leadership are shared across the staff. Weekly reviews of students' small steps in learning, as well as regular monitoring of lessons, inform the school's largely accurate picture of its work. However, systems for holding staff to account lack some rigour. Lesson observations place more emphasis on teaching than on students' learning. In addition, the school recognises that better management information will be available when its new system for tracking students' progress over time is fully embedded.

Governance is good. The governing body has been resolute in its response to the findings of the previous inspection. Safeguarding arrangements are now good with robust systems in place to monitor these very regularly. The governing body contributes appropriately to the school's strategic planning and individual members monitor sections of the school's development plan. The governing body is actively involved in supporting the school. For example, the vice-chair provides the business link for the sixth form's 'Team Enterprise'.

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Partnership working is outstanding and is a feature of the school's robust approach to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. The school's many partnerships extend the curriculum opportunities for students both within and beyond school. This contributes well to good community cohesion, for instance, in enabling post-16 students to play a part in the life of local colleges. Partnerships with specialist agencies make a considerable contribution to students' physical, mental and emotional well-being. The school works very hard to sustain links with parents and carers, using a variety of ways of communicating, depending on circumstance. The recently introduced learning diaries are providing a further method of keeping parents and carers informed of their child's progress.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</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

There are currently no children in this phase. However, leaders and managers have responded effectively to the previous inspection's recommendation that accommodation be improved in readiness for any children of this age. New furniture and equipment, as well as a more flexible approach to children's own choices, mean the school is better prepared for the youngest children. Plans are well under way to expand the facilities for outdoor learning. The school council has played its part in the selection of suitable equipment. Planning for children in this phase follows the appropriate guidance and learning journeys provide a record of children's progress to which parents and carers can contribute. Outcomes for the very small number of children who have been in this phase in recent years were satisfactory.



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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding. The good progress in learning and personal development made in the main school comes to fruition in this post-16 phase. Almost all students transfer from the main school, with a few joining from elsewhere at times of their choice. For these students, transition is sensitively managed, in close liaison with parents and carers.

Students' enthusiasm for school life is testament to the outstanding care they receive and their strong sense of security. Their independence and learning are promoted highly effectively through a rich and varied curriculum which is closely matched to the needs of individuals. Partnerships with local colleges, businesses and charities greatly enrich the choices open to students. They gain accreditation in courses designed to prepare them for adulthood, such as personal safety. The more able achieve a range of externally accredited qualifications at appropriate levels, generally entry levels one to three. The 'Team Enterprise' business provides an excellent focus for the work of the whole group, fostering skills in communication and collaboration, as well as encouraging the development of persistence and resilience. Complex planning and excellent relationships lead to outstanding teaching which meets the learning needs and particular enthusiasms of individual students with verve. The care and support for students are outstanding as is the quality of guidance they receive in choosing courses and making decisions about their future. The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding.

*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

## Views of parents and carers

A below average proportion of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaires. Responses were almost all entirely positive. Inspectors followed up any concerns expressed and took these into account in making the judgements reported.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at George Hastwell 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 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	73	5	23	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	73	5	23	0	0	1	5
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	64	7	32	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	77	5	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	59	8	36	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	59	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	55	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	64	7	32	0	0	1	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	64	7	32	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	64	7	32	1	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	73	5	23	1	5	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.**



30 June 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of George Hastwell School, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 3LW**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We very much enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to the school council and hearing how much those of you in the post-16 group appreciate the wide range of activities on offer. What you had to say helped us decide that you go to a good school where the care you receive is outstanding.

Staff know you all very well and work with lots of people, such as the speech and language therapists, to ensure that you get the help you need. Your enthusiastic approach to learning was great to see. You make good progress in lessons because teachers plan activities that help each one of you to learn. The support you get from the teaching assistants really helps you focus and tackle the tasks. The youngest pupils enjoy using all the new equipment in their classroom and choosing their activities.

The post-16 group make outstanding progress because the wide range of courses and activities provided help you to be as independent as possible. Some of you are gaining qualifications which will help you in adult life. The animated film a group of you made recently is very impressive!

The headteacher and staff work very hard to give you as many experiences as possible. Lots of you told us how much you enjoy your trips to Bendrigg. The cheerleading looked lots of fun as well as helping you to keep fit. It was a real pleasure to listen to the signing choir.

In order for your school to get even better, we have asked your headteacher to track your progress over time. This will help staff and the governing body know what is working well and where improvements are needed.

Good wishes to you all and good luck to those of you who are braving the Big Swim.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Austin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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