

# Rnib Sunshine House Northwood

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102463
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	355198
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Denise Morris

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>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deborah Rafalin
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Ayres
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	33 Dene Road Northwood HA6 2DD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. During the inspection, eight lessons were observed and seven different teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, senior leaders, pupils and members of the governing body. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including planning documents, pupils' work, assessment and tracking data, and safeguarding policies. A total of 16 parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well assessment has improved since the last inspection.
- The quality of the curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The achievement of different groups to ensure that all pupils make the progress expected of them.

## Information about the school

Sunshine House is a non-maintained special school which provides for pupils who are blind or partially sighted and who have additional multiple disabilities. Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities and all have a statement of special educational needs. There are four classes. The pupils come from varied backgrounds which reflect the diverse ethnic and faith populations of London. Eight pupils are in the Early Years Foundation Stage; one attends part-time. There is a Children's Home attached to the school which provides boarding accommodation for up to 12 pupils. Sunshine House is owned by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB). A formal partnership has been formed with nearby Grangewood School. This is a maintained special school in Hillingdon local authority which provides for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties. An executive headteacher leads and manages both schools. The head of education, who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, is seconded full-time to Sunshine House from her post as assistant headteacher of Grangewood.

**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

This is a good school. It has some outstanding aspects, particularly in the way that it cares for its pupils and keeps them safe. As a result of purposeful leadership, the school has improved since the last inspection. Parents and carers are right when they say their children are safe and secure at school. This is because of outstanding safeguarding procedures and the excellent care, guidance and support that the school provides. 'Sunshine House is a lovely specialist school with lots going on for the children. The therapists are excellent and my child loves going there,' commented a parent.

Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress from their individual starting points. The school's promotion of equality is outstanding, and those pupils with additional complex needs achieve as well as their peers. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, benefiting from spacious accommodation and high levels of support as well as curriculum activities that meet their needs well. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from good teaching, with high expectations, positive relationships and exciting activities. Just occasionally, not enough activities are provided and, at these times, a few pupils do not do enough work in the time allowed; consequently, the pace of their learning dips. Assessment has improved since the last inspection. Effective procedures to check pupils' achievements have been introduced. These are just beginning to show how much progress each pupil makes over time, although they are not fully embedded in all classes. A rich range of well-planned curriculum activities engages most pupils. For example, the high-quality on-site hydrotherapy pool contributes exceptionally well to the needs of those with physical and complex needs, in particular. The exciting, outdoor sensory trail contributes well to pupils' healthy lifestyles and to their enjoyment. Good facilities for information and communication technology ensure that the more-able pupils achieve well as they learn to use interactive switches to make choices. Less-able pupils use pre-programmed simple touch switches well to respond to questions, engage in stories and choose activities, although the amount of choice offered in some classes is limited. Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding, resulting in their exceptionally positive behaviour and improving attendance.

Accurate self-evaluation means that leaders know what the school does well and what needs improving. They are aware that there is more to do to embed assessment and tracking procedures so that small steps in progress can be regularly measured. The executive headteacher has a clear vision and high expectations of pupils and staff. He has embedded his ambition for the school by driving good improvements since the last inspection; these include improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, improving the quality of the outdoor environment, introducing appropriate assessment and tracking procedures, and increasing the provision of high-quality training for all adults. As a result, the school provides a very supportive and caring ethos in which pupils thrive. Very strong partnerships, including those with parents and carers, and the effective

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contribution of a wide range of therapists including the school nurse, ensure that all pupils' personal needs are exceptionally well met. The governing body is supportive and regularly offers challenge to the school. As a result, there is a good capacity to improve.

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

- Improve the pace of learning for all groups of pupils by
  - making sure that in lessons there are enough planned activities at the right level of challenge for each individual pupil
  - ensuring that pupils are regularly given choices about their learning.
- Embed the assessment and tracking system by regularly recording pupils' achievements.

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

**2**

Most pupils' attainment on entry to the school is extremely low as a result of their visual impairment and their additional special educational needs and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, all groups of pupils achieve well and most make better than typically expected progress, particularly in literacy, communication and interaction, and in their personal development. For example, a Year 6 pupil read simple sentences in Braille. He used his fingers well to read each letter, gradually building up words. He joined in with games with his teacher as she asked, 'is this a d'? He replied correctly, 'No, it's a t.' Many pupils use touch switches to help them make choices. In physical education, for example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 had lots of fun in the hall as they played with balls and beanbags. All were in wheelchairs and had very limited vision but they worked with switches well to interact and choose activities. Teaching assistants encouraged them to feel and push their ball or beanbag. Because the teacher had organised resources well, pupils were able to hear their ball roll down slopes as it hit bells on the way. This made them laugh and they were very pleased with themselves. A pupil in Year 5 showed good information and communication technology skills as she used a switch to search her laptop for her favourite computer programs. She was able to respond to questions from the teacher by finding pictures. Pupils benefit from close links with their partner school to extend their opportunities. For example, they recently shared a fun day when pupils from both schools were involved in having fun and games together.

Students' excellent behaviour is evident in and around the school and is reflected in their enjoyment of all their school activities. Several pupils make their way independently to their classrooms in the morning, happily greeting adults and showing that they are pleased to be there. Others smile happily as they arrive in their wheelchairs, demonstrating that they are also eager to get to class. In discussion, pupils said that they feel really safe and that they like coming to school. This is evident in the way that attendance is improving. Despite a high level of medical absences, attendance has risen this year. Pupils enjoy the food that is offered at lunchtime, and are aware that fruit and vegetables are good for them. However, they are not regularly offered choices of food. Pupils develop some understanding of growing things. One Year 5 girl, for example, came to a discussion with a radish in her hand that she had dug up from the school garden. She wanted to show how pupils learn to grow vegetables. Many pupils contribute well to their school community through simple jobs such as taking messages or taking registers to the

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office. They enjoy going for walks around the local area and visiting local shops. Pupils of many different cultures and backgrounds work and play together well. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

*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>1</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:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<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?

The good curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and on their achievements. It provides many exciting activities, and the outdoor accommodation is creative and spacious, enabling pupils to improve their mobility so that they can learn about the world around them. Therapies are blended well into the curriculum and there is a smooth transition from one activity to another. Sometimes, too few opportunities are planned for pupils to make choices and to develop their own voice in decision making.

An aspect of the good teaching is that the majority of lessons have clear learning objectives with high expectations of pupils. Relationships are very strong, resulting in excellent-quality social development, particularly behaviour. Teachers take every opportunity to extend pupils' understanding of the world around them. For example, during a mathematics lesson in Years 5 and 6 when pupils were successfully exploring different shapes, a thunderstorm began and it started to rain very heavily. Eventually, hail

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started to fall on the windows and the roof. Children were distracted by the noise of the rain, which was very loud. The teacher used this as an opportunity to extend pupils' understanding of weather and let them stop, listen, feel and talk about the storm. The level of support provided in classrooms is very high, resulting in almost all pupils having individual support when completing their own particular tasks. Assessment is used well to plan the next steps of learning. Successes are recorded well photographically in pupils' records of achievement showing some striking examples of past work. However, assessment data are not always recorded regularly enough in the school's tracking system to show small steps of improvement.

Pupils are extremely well cared for by the whole-school community. Very effective support from a wide range of other professionals, such as speech and physical therapists, the mobility officer and the school nurse, ensures that pupils' personal needs are extremely well met. Pupils working with a physiotherapist in Years 3 and 4, for example, responded extremely well because the therapist explained clearly what was happening, using pictures or objects successfully to help pupils understand. Induction and transition procedures are excellent so that new pupils quickly find their way around, and older pupils transfer smoothly to their next school. Strategies to support vulnerable pupils are excellent, resulting in full inclusion. Close links and regular daily contact with families have resulted in improved attendance this year.

*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?**

Purposeful leadership is a key feature of the school. Leaders are driving improvement in all areas. As a result, the school is effective and provides good facilities which meet pupils' needs very well. The executive headteacher is ably supported by the head of school and staff. Leaders are extremely rigorous in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. Pupils at the school have equal access to all the opportunities, and all groups of pupils make at least good progress. Leaders have embedded their ambition for the school by working closely with their partner school, with support systems and services as well as with different charitable organisations, to create opportunities for pupils. As a result, the school provides an environment in which pupils thrive and which serves them well. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection. Members of the governing body are fully involved in the school's management and offer regular challenge to leaders. They have developed a good strategy for community cohesion which is helping to extend the influence of the school far and wide through staff training and high-quality links with schools in countries such as Jamaica and Bangladesh. Very close local links promote effective working relationships with many other schools. Regular and very robust links with

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parents and carers contribute well to pupils' learning. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are excellent and fully meet current government guidelines. They are rigorously monitored and the site is exceptionally safe and secure.

*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>1</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>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage class. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the careful support and good attention to safety. Children are extremely well looked after, effective welfare arrangements are in place, and they are very safe and secure in their environment.. Children share their learning with pupils in Year 1. They behave extremely well and respond to peers and adults eagerly. They play safely and happily. Many have limited ability to communicate and switches are used whenever possible by staff to encourage understanding and give children choices. Children make good progress in all areas and particularly good progress in communication skills because they are encouraged to explore resources to help them understand the world. For example, in one session, children were exploring water. This was a great favourite and they were able to splash happily and have lots of fun. They used objects such as a sponge and a large pebble, and were encouraged to explore the difference when both were put into water. However, the pace of learning dipped slightly because of turn-taking, meaning that some waited while others had a turn. In another session, children linked their exploration to a story they had heard about the seaside. They made excellent progress as they explored sand, shells and water with their hands and feet. One child in particular had great fun as he splashed his feet in water making lots of mess and squealing in delight. Because the teacher had prepared seaside sounds on children's switches, they were eager to listen. One child picked up a small switch and put it to her ear as she listened to the sound of seagulls. She stilled her head and listened intently showing clear awareness. The effective outdoor

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space gives children good opportunities for exploration in a safe and secure environment. Evidence of past work shows that children benefit from a good range of sensory activities.

Effective leadership results in children's achievements being checked regularly. Photographic and annotated evidence shows that most children make good progress during their time in the class.

*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:	2
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

## Views of parents and carers

About half of all parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaires. These show that they are extremely pleased with the school. 'My experiences with the school have all been very good,' wrote one parent. All of the parents and carers who responded say that the school keeps their children safe and that the school meets their children's particular needs. They feel well informed about their children's progress and are happy with their children's experience at school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sunshine House 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 33 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	81	2	13	1	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	63	4	25	1	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	56	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	69	4	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	56	6	38	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)	9	56	4	25	1	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	56	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	44	7	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	56	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	69	5	31	0	0	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 Pupils

**Inspection of RNIB Sunshine House, Northwood HA6 2DD**

Thank you for your help on my recent visit to your school. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out during my visit.

- Your school gives you a good education helping you to make good progress.
- You told me that you enjoy coming to school and most of you come as often as you can; well done for this!
- You achieve well in your lessons and in your therapies.
- You told me all about eating healthily and how much you enjoy your lunches.
- You are polite to visitors and you work well together.
- Your leaders keep you very safe and secure.
- I was pleased to see that some of you do jobs to help your school and other pupils. Well done for this.

I am asking your school to do two things to help you to do even better.

- To make sure you all have enough to do in your lessons so that you can do more tasks.
- To make sure your achievements are recorded regularly.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris Lead inspector

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