

Medina House School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118228
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	358291
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Timothy Feast

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Eccles
Headteacher	Chris Honour
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eleven lessons were observed with eight teachers being seen. Meetings were held with school leaders and teachers, members of the governing body, an officer from the local authority and the school nurse. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at documents including some relating to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation and its improvement planning, school policies and procedures, and considered the views of 39 parents and carers in their responses to the parental questionnaires.

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

- How effectively the school uses assessment information on pupils' progress to inform teaching and the deployment of additional adults in the classroom.
- How effectively the governing body and senior leaders contribute to school improvement.
- The impact that the curriculum changes have on the different groups of pupils in the school.

Information about the school

Medina House School is a small special school for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. A quarter of the pupils have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are a small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and they are taught alongside older children in different classes depending on their learning difficulties and disabilities. There are twice as many boys as girls. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just over one third. The school has a very few children who are looked after by the local authority. Many pupils in different age groups join or leave the school during the course of the year. The school has achieved Healthy School status. Since September 2010, the school's current headteacher and deputy headteacher have been acting in an interim capacity.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the meeting of legal requirements, especially safeguarding, to leadership and management, and to the way assessment is used to support learning.

Despite weaknesses in leadership and management, the school is providing an acceptable standard of education. Changes in the senior leadership and governance of the school since the previous inspection have had a negative impact on the school's effectiveness, which has deteriorated since then. Actions taken to tackle the key issues from the last inspection have not brought about sufficient improvement. Although there has been an improvement in the analysis and use of assessment data to inform target setting for pupils' learning, this information has not been used effectively by teachers to plan appropriate activities to meet the differing academic levels and needs of the pupils in their classes and accelerate pupils' progress, or to ensure the effective deployment of other adults in the classroom. School leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, partly because the criteria they use for making their judgements are not robust enough. As a result, the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning is poor. These weaknesses mean the school has an inadequate capacity to improve. The governing body has been unsuccessful in securing adequate leadership and management in the school. Legal requirements for safeguarding, performance management and the promotion of community cohesion are not met.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make the progress that is expected of them across the different areas of the curriculum. This reflects the satisfactory teaching they receive. Most aspects of pupils' personal development are taught well and outcomes, such as their behaviour, feeling safe and adopting healthy lifestyles, are good. Although the school's attendance is low, the reason for this is pupils' medical condition. The curriculum is satisfactory. Changes have been made to it since September 2010 but school leaders have not yet monitored the impact of these changes on pupils' learning.

There are some good elements to the care, guidance and support that pupils receive and this provision contributes to what pleases parents and carers most about the school. However, notwithstanding the good aspects, care is inadequate because at the time of the inspection, the school was not taking all the required steps to provide effective safeguarding of the pupils.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take effective and immediate steps to put in place all the statutory requirements currently missing, especially those relating to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils.
- Improve leaders' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school by:
 - monitoring the quality of provision, especially teaching and learning
 - increasing the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and improving the quality of strategic planning.
- Ensure that class teachers use assessment information effectively to:
 - provide appropriate challenge for pupils
 - enable the effective deployment of other adults in the classroom to support pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils make satisfactory progress in the key skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Girls do as well as the boys, with, for example, older pupils of both sexes writing positively about their visit to the botanical gardens. Those pupils with autistic spectrum disorders often make good progress as a result of the consistent approaches taken to classroom management to help them achieve their targets. For example, when making an edible spider in their food technology lesson, they demonstrated good achievement in communicating their ideas about the taste of liquorice. A few pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make less progress than their peers because of persistent absence linked to their medical condition. Looked after pupils make similar progress to their peers. Pupils who join during the school year integrate well into the school community and make similar progress to their classmates. Some of these pupils told inspectors how pleased they were with their progress since coming to the school.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They listen well to their teachers and the contribution of the others in their class. Pupils both enjoy school and feel very safe, and this was confirmed in their questionnaires and those of their parents and carers. Pupils benefit from their sessions in the hydrotherapy pool. They participate fully in the school council and with some activities in the wider community, including designing plans for the renovation of the local Downside Park. The wide range of visits and activities help pupils to develop well their understanding of different cultures and religions. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and, in their behaviour around the school, showed a good understanding and application of social conventions. A good example of the pupils' personal development was their positive approach to the visit where they experienced what homelessness might feel like.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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 progress that pupils make with their learning is helped by the positive relationships they have with adults. Resources are chosen well by staff so that the pupils are engaged and motivated to complete planned activities. Adults demonstrate secure behaviour management techniques and teach social skills well. These strengths mean pupils, including those who have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders, make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teaching of the important key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is satisfactory. Teachers are successful in developing pupils' communication skills. However, teachers do not take sufficient account of the information they have about pupils' academic attainment. As a result, challenge is not always high enough and the teachers' use of the other adults in the classroom is not always effective. Sometimes, the number of adults in the class limits pupils' independence and inhibits the progress they make.

The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting the particular needs of the pupils. It has strengths in the provision for personal development and in the variety of activities offered, but some weaknesses in planning, in that it does not always build on pupils' prior learning. Pupils told inspectors of many interesting visits and visitors that they have experienced.

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Some of the pupils talked enthusiastically of the coaching from a representative of the local football club and the enjoyable visit that they made to its football ground. Older pupils talked positively about the arrangements that had taken place to make their transition to secondary school a success.

Pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable receive very thorough care and support. The school works well with an extensive range of external agencies to help meet the many needs of the pupils, especially medical. However, the statutory requirements for promoting the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are not met, so care, guidance and support are inadequate.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have not been successful in maintaining the quality of provision as reported at the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has fallen. Staff commented in their questionnaires that the process of decision making is ineffective and that there have been problems with leadership for some time. School leaders do not routinely monitor the impact of their policies. Their monitoring of teaching has been inadequate and information has not been used to bring about sufficiently rapid change. Statutory requirements for performance management of teachers are not met.

Governance is also inadequate. The governing body fails to ensure that it is meeting all the statutory requirements. Safeguarding policies and procedures are out of date, required training is not always evident and school leaders are sometimes unsure of the correct procedures to be taken. The current systems in place to maintain and update policies and procedures are inadequate.

Although partnerships with many external agencies are good, partnership activities have had limited impact on the effectiveness of leadership and management. Parents and carers think highly of the school and feel fully involved as learning partners, but there is limited evidence of school leaders using their views to help make important strategic decisions. Staff value all pupils equally and take appropriate steps to ensure that pupils suffer no discriminatory or harassing behaviour in school. The curriculum provides experiences that contribute effectively to community cohesion. However, the school has not met statutory requirements for a detailed audit of its context and has no clear strategy for development or formal evaluation of its contribution to community cohesion within the school or beyond.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school is in the process of adapting the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage guidance to meet the very complex needs of its learners. The children are currently placed in three different class bases, to cater for their differing needs. They make satisfactory progress in these classes through receiving satisfactory teaching. In one session, children made appropriate progress in developing their communication skills, for example, in communicating whether the spaghetti they were handling was 'hard' or 'soft'.

However, while the teachers' planning in the different classes is broadly adequate, it is not always sufficiently focused on the specific outcomes expected for this age group. Limited progress has been made across all three classes to provide more structured play opportunities, a key issue from the last inspection. While there is much appropriate support for the children in their classes, school leaders have not ensured compliance with statutory requirements for safeguarding the welfare of the children, as in the other key stages in the school. School leaders have not succeeded in establishing a common vision for this age range of children across the three classes and the deployment of the children in this way has made the improvement of the provision in this key stage more complex.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
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	4

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was above average for a special school. Those who responded and who talked with inspectors are overwhelmingly positive about their children's experience of the school. Comments include how happy they are with the support their children receive, though some would like more therapy services. The inspection team's findings support the views of parents and carers about how happy the pupils appear and their evident enjoyment of what they receive at Medina House. The inspection team's findings, however, do not endorse parental views on the leadership of the school because of the lack of compliance with legal requirements and the school's inadequate improvement since its previous inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Medina 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 61 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	79	7	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	85	5	13	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	77	9	23	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	79	7	18	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	82	7	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	74	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	74	9	23	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)	30	77	6	15	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	85	6	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	77	8	21	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	77	8	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	77	7	18	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	87	5	13	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).

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



20 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Medina House School, Newport PO30 2HS

Thank you for your welcome on our recent visit to your school. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out during the visit. These are some of the best things.

- You enjoy coming to school and you behave well.
- You make the progress that is expected of you.
- You told us about your healthy lifestyles and the way in which you help the school through being members of the council.
- Your school works well with people such as the school nurse and the physiotherapist to keep you healthy.

However, we judged that your school needs 'a notice to improve'; this means the school has to improve more quickly. We have asked your school to do these things to make it better:

- Make sure everything is done straight away to keep you safe.
- Make sure your headteacher and the governors do all the things they are supposed to do by law and check that they are actually happening.
- Make sure your teachers use all the information they have about you to help plan lessons which will help you to make more progress.

All of you can help by continuing to try hard. Thanks again for your welcome.

Yours sincerely

Timothy Feast Lead inspector

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