

# Hall School

#### Inspection report

Unique Reference Number121257Local AuthorityNorfolkInspection number380193

Inspection dates5–6 October 2011Reporting inspectorJudith Charlesworth

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

**Type of school** Special

**School category** Community special

Age range of pupils3–19Gender of pupilsMixedGender of pupils in the sixth formMixedNu mber of pupils on the school roll72Of which, number on roll in the sixth form13

**Appropriate authority** The governing body

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eleven lessons were observed, taught by nine teachers, teaching assistants and external professionals in the creative arts. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body and staff, and informal discussions took place with pupils, parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: policies, records and practices relating to safeguarding; records of pupils' progress; curriculum planning and initiatives; documents and plans relating to the school's communication and interaction specialism, and various documents relating to pupils' personal development and the care and support offered by the school. Ninteen inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, along with those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- To what extent is the school's specialism in communication and interaction prevalent in its everyday work, and what is its impact on the pupils' outcomes?
- How effectively is information and communication technology now used by staff to support teaching and learning throughout the school?
- What is the impact of the refreshed provision and leadership and management of the sixth form on students' outcomes?
- How effective is the new provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

#### Information about the school

Hall school is about average in size for this type of school. All pupils have significant and complex needs including severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and multi-sensory impairment. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils are looked after by the local authority and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. There are three children of Early Years Foundation Stage age, who are taught in a group with pupils in Years 1 and 2.

The school was awarded specialist status for its work in communication and interaction in 2008 and increasingly provides outreach support to other schools. The school's work has also been recognised by the Activemark, Sportsmark, International School, Healthy Schools and Excellence in Work Related Learning awards. Building work has just been completed to improve the school's administrative facilities and to release space for teaching and learning. The headteacher took up his post in September 2011, and the school was led by the two assistant headteachers for the two terms prior to this.

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**

Hall is a good school. The quality of teaching is good, and the curriculum and support, care and guidance are outstanding. Pupils' outcomes are good. They make good academic progress, and some aspects of their personal development are outstanding. The school has improved since its previous inspection and now has a number of outstanding aspects. A particular example is the school's communication and interaction specialism which has had a significant impact on the work of the school as a whole, and on pupils' outcomes. Outstanding systems have been implemented to ensure that communication and understanding are at the forefront of planning, teaching and learning. Tied in with this is the school's outstanding progress in the use of information and communication technology to support teaching, learning and communication since the previous inspection.

The staff and leaders have an outstanding commitment to providing the very best for the pupils. This is shown in the strong drive for improvement, and the exceptional care and support shown to pupils, their families and to the school itself. Currently, for example, some staff are giving up time at weekends to create a garden of remembrance. Partnerships with parents and carers are very strong and very much appreciated by them. The curriculum has improved and is now outstanding. It is enhanced by a wide range of community partnerships and opportunities for inclusion, and provides numerous rich and enjoyable opportunities for learning. The increasing emphasis on outdoor and real-life learning, together with the inclusion of creative, active ways of learning in many lessons, contribute to pupils' outstanding behaviour and enjoyment of school. The quality of teaching is good, and the use of assessment to underpin planning for both teaching and learning is outstanding.

Since the arrival of the new headteacher, changes to the senior leadership team have been implemented and have already supported improvement. The new senior leadership team is dedicated to increasing the rate of school improvement towards excellence in all that it does. Self-evaluation is robust and the leaders are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, they have identified, in common with inspection findings, that the analysis of whole-school and cohort data is not as stringent as the analysis of individual pupils' progress data. This limits the school's ability to provide fine-tuned interventions to improve teaching and learning. Governance is good. Members of the governing body are active in their role and keen to improve aspects of their own and the school's work that will lead to excellence.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Provision in the sixth form is good and developing rapidly, although it is too early for the full impact of some improvements to be evaluated. The students achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also good, although due to low numbers, it is not distinct from the main school. Children's individual needs are well met through careful planning. They make good and often rapid progress towards their individual targets. However, this quality does not extend far enough into curriculum planning. Additionally, the school has not settled on a system to track the children's learning and development over their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Taking into account the school's improvement to date, the very recent changes to the senior leadership, and the areas for improvement, the school's capacity for further sustained improvement is judged to be good.

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

- Improve the analysis of whole-school performance data in order to identify further interventions for individuals and groups, and inform strategic planning to improve teaching and learning.
- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - developing curriculum planning to more fully reflect how topics provide rich and varied contexts for learning and development
  - implementing a system to track children's small steps of progress towards the early learning goals in the longer-term, in order to inform planning for interventions and improvements in provision
  - developing the provision's separate identity, as numbers on roll increase.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment on entry is low due to the complexity of their needs, but their academic progress is good. Five challenging targets are set each term for every pupil on the basis of detailed, regular and accurate assessments. The school's robust analysis of each pupil's progress shows that most meet their targets, and that there are clear reasons when they do not, such as medical needs. The same data is analysed to show the progress made by individuals and groups in comparison to national performance data. This shows that there are no differences in the performance of different groups of pupils, such as those with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, or across the different age groups. It also shows that the majority of pupils make more progress than expected. Pupils' progress in personal development, speaking and listening is particularly good as a result of the strong focus on these aspects. Overall, pupils' rate of progress tends to increase the longer they have been at Hall school.

The pupils really enjoy school and attendance is higher than that usually found in similar schools, despite the frailty of many. They are engaged and enthusiastic in

# **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

lessons and learn very well. On one occasion, for example, a group of Year 7 pupils took it in turns to role-play Shackleton, exploring the Antarctic on a sledge. They waited patiently but with great anticipation for their turn, cheered the arrival of each new explorer, sprinkled them with 'snow' and acted out the 'wind'. One pupil spontaneously said 'snowball' which showed that he understood exactly what was happening. The pupils make full use of the spacious, varied grounds and interesting playground equipment at break times, and clearly choose to be active when they can. They happily eat healthy foods, and incidents of deliberate bullying or harassment towards one another are very rare. Pupils have excellent, trusting relationships with staff, and they and their parents and carers say that they feel safe in school. Pupils' good outcomes, outstanding behaviour and growing maturity

prepare them well for the next stage of their lives after leaving school.

#### These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall, and a substantial proportion of lessons are outstanding. These are often those with a strongly creative or active element which heightens pupils' enjoyment, involvement and learning. Examples were seen in sports studies for the sixth form, creative, interactive sessions held in the new studio, and in some classroom lessons. Strengths of all lessons include outstanding behaviour management; the seamless team-work between staff; and the use of information and communication technology to support teaching, learning and pupils'

<sup>&</sup>lt;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.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

understanding and communication which is a prime focus of all lessons. Touch screen or interactive white boards are very effectively used in all classrooms, and a variety of electronic aids to support communication are provided for individuals throughout the school. A symbol system is used effectively as a means of communication and as an alternative to the written word. In less effective lessons, opportunities are sometimes missed to allow pupils' maximum independence, and tasks are occasionally too challenging or do not fully meet their particular needs.

Assessment to support learning is outstanding. Pupils' attainment is assessed against a widely-used commercial schedule. The information derived underpins the termly targets set for each individual which include at least one from the communication and interaction scheme of work. Targets for individuals are shown on all lesson plans. Progress towards these is rigorously tracked in order to inform any interventions required and to set new targets.

The curriculum is outstanding and supports pupils' personal development and academic progress very effectively. The curriculum complies with statutory requirements and the documentation provides a wealth of detailed plans and resources for staff. It is regularly evaluated and improved in the light of experience. Recently, this has led to a greater focus on creativity and opportunities for drama in lessons, which is resulting in an increase in pupils' enjoyment, involvement and achievement. The curriculum is enhanced by an outstanding range of partnerships and opportunities for inclusion and joint working with mainstream schools. Participation in various community projects, such as litter-collecting in the local park, supports pupils' contribution to the community. The curriculum emphasises being active and learning outside. This is reflected in the introduction of Forest School activities, and the Activemark, Sportsmark and Healthy School awards.

The support, care and guidance given to pupils and their families are outstanding. Staff recognise that communication and understanding are at the heart of pupils' learning and settled behaviour, and provide outstanding support to them and their families in these aspects. Behaviour management plans are well-devised and very effective. Consequently, individuals' behavioural issues decrease and the school is generally a happy, calm place where pupils feel safe. Transitions in and out of school are carefully and sensitively managed in all age groups. Individuals with particular needs or difficulties are very well supported through vigilance, care and the school's outstanding partnerships with external agencies.

#### These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

#### How effective are leadership and management?

All staff, parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire agree that Hall School is well led. This effective leadership strongly underpins the school's continual drive towards excellence, an increased role in the community and the common ambition for pupils' maximum achievement and well-being. These foci were maintained during the time when there was no substantive headteacher because of the effective leadership and robust systems already in place. Consequently, the school continued to improve and develop. The new leadership team, supported by the staff and governing body, is now set on increasing the rate of improvement and realising its reformulated development plans.

The school's analysis of pupils' progress towards their individual targets is very effective and informs planning for progress. Judgements on attainment are checked within school and by external colleagues, and analysis is secure. This enables staff to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities for learning and well-being, and to act on any differences found. Whole-school data that compares performance with national expectations are produced on the basis of this but are not sufficiently well used to inform strategic planning.

Governance is good. Members are active, highly supportive and have contributed to the school's improvement and development, for example in relation to the building work. However, the governing body does not always provide sufficient professional challenge, for example in relation to pupils' performance. In the recent past, some routine matters were not taken care of, such as ensuring the regularity of fire drills. This has been appropriately addressed. Safeguarding procedures are very effective. Practices are regularly reviewed and staff are vigilant to individuals' needs and any changes in their behaviour. Child protection procedures are outstanding. Concerns are followed up immediately and the school's outstanding partnerships with many external agencies mean that extra help can be initiated quickly. The school does an increasing amount to promote community cohesion. Its work with parents and carers and within the local community is excellent and is strongly supported by the work of the communication and interaction team. The school has developed links with a school in New Zealand, and staff have visited and brought back interesting ways of working to use in school. Engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff do a great deal to support them, and involve them in their children's education and the everyday life of the school.

#### These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account:	•
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the	2

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

At the time of the previous inspection, the school had not admitted children of this age for some while. Provision is relatively new, therefore, and with such low numbers, is not led, managed or run separately from the main school.

Provision is good. Children are grouped with pupils in Years 1 and 2, all of whom follow an appropriate curriculum based on the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Children are warmly welcomed into the group and their physical, emotional and social needs are met very well. Outcomes are good. Children soon settle into the structured routines of the day. They know, for example, that the morning starts with registration around the table, and most spontaneously come to sit down at the right time. Children enjoy their activities and the close relationships they have with staff. Their confidence and behaviour improves quickly, and there are many examples of their rapid development.

The children benefit from the school's robust education and care practices and their welfare is very well safeguarded. High quality individual education plans and lesson plans are devised on the basis of careful assessments of the children's needs and current attainment. Good records are kept of their achievements, supported by photographs and written notes. Individuals' personal targets are re-set on the basis of their progress. However, the school has not settled on a system to track the children's learning, development and progress towards the early learning goals over time. This prevents the fine-tuning of interventions and work to improve the provision. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and communication, which supports effective learning across the whole curriculum. The curriculum includes all the required areas of learning. A very careful check is made to ensure that the steps towards all the early learning goals are addressed through half-termly topics such as 'ourselves'. However, these topics are not well enough drawn up in plans which show how they provide a rich, changing context for learning and development across the areas of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

<del>-   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -</del>	0
Taking into account:	_
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

#### Sixth form

Provision in the sixth form is good and improvement is ongoing. The accommodation is much improved since the previous inspection and the sixth form now largely runs separately from the main school. Leadership and management have recently been strengthened and are good. Improvements have been implemented as a result of a review of teaching and learning in the department following a dip in students' achievement last year. This is now on track to resume its customary good level.

The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. The curriculum has very recently been refreshed to be more creative, more community-based and to provide more opportunities for developing independence and work-related learning. The school has already gained an award for excellence in work-related learning. Work shadowing is about to be implemented so that all students have the opportunity for work experience. Further opportunities have been introduced for students to learn practical skills, such as shopping, cooking, travelling, and planting, growing and eating their own vegetables. Accreditation is offered wherever possible, and students are suitably involved in assessing their own learning as far as they are able to.

High quality systems are used to plan the curriculum and assess and track students' developing skills. Target setting has recently become more sharply focused and challenging. Data show that students generally make good and often outstanding progress in their academic skills and personal development. Behaviour is outstanding and attendance is high which indicate the students' enjoyment of all that school offers. Clear post-school pathways are planned with students, their parents and carers and external professionals, and students are well prepared for the next step in their lives.

#### These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	_
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

A slightly lower proportion of questionnaires than usually found was returned by parents and carers. Of these, almost all were overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of the school. This correlates with the outcomes of an identical questionnaire sent to parents and carers by the school at the end of last academic year, to which there was a higher return rate. There were additional positive comments on several inspection questionnaires, such as: 'We have been so pleased with the decision to send our child to Hall School. He is now happy and making progress — a huge relief for us.' The inspection findings support parents' and carers' positive views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hall 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 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

Statements		ngly ree	Agree		Agree Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	63	6	32	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	58	7	37	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	47	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	63	6	32	1	5	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)	7	37	10	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	47	10	53	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	53	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	63	6	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	79	4	21	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)					
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate		
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0		
Primary schools	6	46	42	6		
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9		
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3		
Special schools	30	48	19	3		
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5		
All schools	10	44	39	6		

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see <a href="https://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a>).

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.

the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and Attainment:

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.

the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, Leadership and management:

> 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: 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.

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.

the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and Progress:

> 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.



7 October 2011

Dear Pupils

#### Inspection of Hall School, Norwich, NR6 7AD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn in your lessons. We came to school to see how well you were all doing and how happy you were. We found that Hall is a good school and has many outstanding features. Some of the best aspects are:

- your excellent behaviour
- the good progress you make
- how much you enjoy sport and outside activities, especially the lovely school grounds and play equipment
- the exciting curriculum
- the outstanding way the school works towards improving your communication skills
- the use of information and communication technology to help you learn and communicate
- the way that staff plan lessons to help you meet your personal targets as well as learn in subjects
- the way that all the staff want to provide you with the very best education and care that they can.

We have asked the school to do two things to become even better. These are:

- to improve what staff do with all the information collected on your progress so they can help you all learn more
- to develop the curriculum planning and assessment system for the very youngest children.

You can all help, too, by continuing to behave well and try hard.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely
Judith Charlesworth
Lead inspector

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