

Kingswode Hoe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115453
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	379076
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Lewis

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gwen Ilot
Headteacher	Elizabeth Drake
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
School address	Sussex Road Colchester CO3 3QJ
Telephone number	01206 576408
Fax number	01206 571477
Email address	admin@kingswodehoe.essex.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 17 lessons taught by 12 teachers. They observed the school's work and scrutinised the school's development plans. Inspectors held meetings with governors, groups of pupils, individual parents and carers and the school staff. They looked at information about pupils' progress, procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and the ways in which these are checked. They examined 42 questionnaires returned from parents and carers, 102 from pupils and 27 from staff.

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

- How good is the progress of different groups in the school and particularly that of the Key Stage 2 pupils, the higher attainers and those who have autistic spectrum disorders?
- How well do teachers adapt their lessons to meet individual pupils' specific learning needs and next-steps targets?
- What has been the impact on pupil skills and outcomes of the changes in the ways in which the school approaches reading, writing and mathematics?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and additional complex learning needs. Although registered for pupils aged 5–16, the school has not admitted any pupils to Key Stage 1 or the Early Years Foundation Stage for over 5 years. The Early Years Foundation Stage was not included in this inspection. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs, almost always because of moderate learning difficulties. Since the last inspection there has been a marked increase in the number of pupils who have multiple disabilities and needs. The large majority also have one or more additional learning need identified, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) or speech communication and language difficulties (SCLD). The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than usual. Almost all pupils are White British. There are three times as many boys as girls at the school. The school has a number of awards particularly for sport and health and an International Schools Award.

The school provides an outreach service to other special and mainstream schools, in collaboration with other special schools for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. A small number of pupils return to mainstream after spending some time at Kingswode Hoe, others have inclusion opportunities at local mainstream schools. Building work was taking place to create a new centre for this work, as well as additional facilities for the school at the time of the inspection.

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 that is improving well. Everyone linked to it is proud of what it achieves and determined that its pupils will achieve even more. Parents and carers comment on how much progress their children have made, sometimes in a very short time at the school. They praise the ways in which the school motivates their children to learn and cares for their children. The quality of care, guidance and support is certainly outstanding. The school works extremely well with others to support those pupils whose circumstances may make them most vulnerable. It has also worked exceptionally effectively with parents and carers to raise attendance so that it is now outstanding. Pupils' feel safe, respected and valued. The school's work with other agencies and partners is excellent, both to protect its most vulnerable pupils and to extend the range of learning opportunities that all its pupils have. The very strong senior leadership team and good governing body know what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement. They have put into place a number of initiatives that are already beginning to improve this further, including completely reviewing teaching and learning and changing teachers' roles. Staff are excited by these changes and feel hugely valued. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The areas identified by inspectors for development already feature as part of the school's improvement plan. For example, subject leaders are taking more responsibility for standards and for analysing the data held about pupils' progress and for influencing teaching and learning in their subjects. All this and the good-quality provision mean that the school provides good value for money and that the school is well placed to improve further.

Although pupils' attainment remains low overall from very low starting points, pupil outcomes are good and improving, including those of pupils with more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some elements such as pupils' understanding of how to live healthy lives and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. All pupils, including those with behavioural challenges or communication and language difficulties progress hugely in their social skills, displaying tolerance and understanding of each other's differences and needs. The good behaviour, excellent attendance and the many practical opportunities pupils have to apply their good and developing literacy and numeracy skills all set them up extremely well for the next stages of their education. The school's extensive partnerships with other schools, colleges and local businesses mean pupils have many opportunities to contribute to, and be included in, their local community. This gives them increasing confidence in their ability to do things for themselves and to

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make their mark. Excellent partnership working with parents and carers helps pupils to extend and apply their learning in their homes.

Progress from pupils' varied starting points is good overall, including that of different groups such as girls and those who have additional learning needs such as those with autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils' achievement and progress are good because the curriculum and teaching and learning are good and are improving strongly. A good range of qualifications and learning experiences are in place that challenge and excite pupils whatever their abilities. Some pupils make exceptional progress particularly in science and mathematics and against the targets in their individual education plans. Key Stage 2 pupils make similarly good progress to older pupils in their learning and exceptionally so in the management of their behaviour and speaking and listening skills. Such strong progress means that a few are able to return to mainstream schools.

The school has rigorous systems for monitoring teaching and learning. These have already improved the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by focusing on the ways in which teachers adapt their lessons to different pupils' needs. Work in using the data the school has about pupils' progress to target particular aspects of subjects and tailor interventions to groups of pupils is well developed in English and mathematics and science but is not so developed in other subjects. In a few lessons, this means that activities and lesson objectives are not sufficiently adjusted to all pupils' needs, including the targets in their individual education plans. Excellent use is made of questions to challenge pupils' thinking in some lessons, but occasionally teachers are too quick to provide the answer rather than helping pupils to work things out for themselves.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of consistently good or better teaching and learning by:
 - improving the use of questioning so that it supports pupils' thinking and active involvement in all lessons
 - ensuring all teachers in all subjects match work to what is known about pupils' current levels of attainment, including their targets in their individual educational plans to move their learning on.
- Make even more effective use of what is known about pupils' achievement and progress so that:
 - teachers' planning in all subjects is closely linked to what the data says about pupils' progress in different aspects of subjects
 - subject improvement planning is linked to this data.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils join the school with exceptionally low standards, reflecting their particular

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learning challenges and needs and, for some, their interrupted schooling. A few pupils enter with some skills closer to those of other pupils their age. The school has put into place a range of inclusion programmes and school-based courses that allow everyone to achieve, whether at GCSE level in mathematics, art or science or at other levels such as through Unit Awards or linked college courses. Pupils regularly achieve the lower GCSE grades in subjects such as mathematics, art and science, and occasionally higher. The school organises its teaching groups well to enable pupils to work at levels that are appropriate for their needs. There are no differences in the achievement and progress of pupils from different groups, backgrounds or who have different learning needs. Pupils make good and strongly improving gains in their key skills such as numeracy and literacy, their use of information and communication technology and in particular to their attitude to learning. This is because the new approaches to teaching aspects such as mathematics, phonics and writing are being systematically implemented and monitored and pupils’ skills are being progressively built up.

In lessons observed, learning and progress were almost always good or better. In most lessons pupils are enthusiastic and excited by their learning, as in an excellent Year 11 science lesson where students were comparing different strengths of concrete. The teacher’s skilled questioning helped students to express their ideas in more scientific language and to suggest the next steps in their experiments. In an outstanding drama lesson the teacher’s skilled use of group activities, careful questioning and the excellent pace of the lesson enabled students to develop their understanding of characterisation and express this through the different characters they were playing extremely well. Teaching assistants make a strong well-targeted contribution to these lessons through supporting individuals or groups or modelling the target response. Occasionally the work is not so well matched to pupils’ needs or the lesson is too teacher-led so that there are missed opportunities for pupils to think or do things for themselves. In these instances, though their behaviour is good, they are too passive in their learning. Overall, though, pupils become much more aware of their own capability and take up opportunities to be involved in school and community life with enthusiasm, a few saying they would like to do even more. This is testament to the school’s determination to help each appreciate their own and others’ worth and the excellent ways in which students are prepared for the next steps in their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	4
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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding because teachers have a good understanding of pupils' individual needs and levels of attainment. Most use this knowledge well in their planning. Most teachers are very skilled in gaining pupils' interest and give good verbal feedback to pupils as to how well they are doing. This helps pupils to develop their understanding further. Good use of marking in books and of homework reinforces learning and the homework club ensures everyone has support for getting it done. Occasionally the lesson objectives are not made as clear to pupils as they could be or opportunities are missed for reinforcing pupils' broader learning targets, such as their language or literacy targets, in another subject. This tends to be the case in the small number of satisfactory lessons where the focus is too much on completing an activity rather than on learning through the activity.

The good and improving curriculum is very relevant to pupils' needs. It is strengthened by the excellent enrichment activities and the partnership working with other schools. Trips and residential visits, as well as the business links and courses pupils can take with other schools and colleges, mean that they have opportunities to develop and apply a broad range of skills and talents. Ability grouping for different subjects and the careful deployment of staff enable all pupils to take and achieve qualifications that challenge and excite them. Excellent sporting and cultural links, work experience and independent travel programmes enrich pupils' experiences further, as well as giving them confidence in their dealings with others.

Excellent links with colleges, businesses and schools and careful detailed planning mean that there are highly effective arrangements for induction into the school and transition into the next stages of education and life. Pupils quickly develop highly trusting relationships with staff. Pupils' well being is tenaciously supported through very strong pastoral care systems, rigorous attention to managing risks, excellent working with families and additional provision such as the social use of language programmes. Families and other agencies pay tribute to the school's work in supporting all pupils and the school is tenacious in making sure pupils have any specialist resources that they need because of their additional learning or medical needs. The school's outreach provision is very well managed and valued by the

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schools it supports.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The excellent senior leadership, strengthened governing body and staff are ambitious to achieve more. All are committed to a common vision of inspiring pupils to achieve their best and providing the best environment and learning experiences for them to do this. This vision has been implemented well since the last inspection because subject leaders' roles have been strengthened and there has been more rigorous gathering and analysis of data. Detailed and improving tracking systems mean that staff are quick to identify any pupil in danger of falling behind or not meeting the challenging targets set for them. Excellent college links and links with other schools mean that where pupils have a specific talent this is nurtured and catered for. Leadership of teaching and learning is excellent. The right things have been targeted and there is very strong support for staff development and accountability. A culture of being self critical has been established within all staff teams and subjects. Best practice is identified, discussed and shared so that teachers themselves speak openly about how much their teaching and pupils' learning have improved. Governors are very visible in the school and have a good range of relevant skills that are well deployed to hold the school to account. The school promotes equality extremely well. It is determined that all pupils have the opportunity to be included in all activities and to succeed, and monitors the success and participation of different groups carefully.

Safeguarding procedures are good and are regularly updated to ensure pupils' safety. Staff are well trained and ever vigilant, emphasising health and safety elements at all times in lessons as well as reviewing pupils' emotional well-being carefully. The school is a very cohesive community. Its work with the community and businesses locally, its outreach work and its regional and international links all help others to understand more about people with special educational needs and disabilities. It, therefore, promotes community cohesion well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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

Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. The very large majority were overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. Parents and carers feel strongly that the teaching is good at the school and that their children's needs are being met. They are pleased with the way in which their children are enabled to live healthy lives and are kept safe. Almost all feel well informed about their child's progress and how to help them learn, though a small number wish to be even more involved in this. A few would like more information about their child's progress and how their child's particular learning needs are being met.

Inspectors found the school to be a good school where the teaching and learning is good and improving. The school works extremely well with parents and involves them very well in their child's learning, although it is always looking for even more effective ways of doing this. It is vigilant in keeping pupils' safe and supports pupils' understanding of how to live healthy lives extremely well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kingswode Hoe 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	45	21	50	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	27	64	14	33	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	24	57	14	33	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	38	25	60	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	60	16	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	23	55	16	38	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	55	16	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)	20	48	17	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	23	55	16	38	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	45	20	48	0	0	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	36	22	52	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	57	17	40	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	24	57	16	38	1	2	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	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 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.



14 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingswode Hoe School, Colchester, CO3 3QJ

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school recently and letting us see your work. Thank you for talking with us and telling us about your school. It was good to hear how much you enjoy your lessons and feel the school is really helping you to make progress.

We found your school to be a good school. Some things it has done recently such as improving the ways you are taught reading and writing are making it even better. These are some of the things we found out about your school.

- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and join in physical activities very well.
- The teaching is good, your lessons are interesting and you all make good or better progress.
- You behave well and your attendance is excellent.
- The school works well with your families and with other schools and the community to help prepare you for when you leave and to help you take courses in other schools and colleges

The headteacher, staff and governors are working together well to make the school and the teaching even better. In order to achieve this we have asked your headteacher and staff to make sure that:

- teachers ask you questions and give you work to do that really help you to think and learn for yourself
- the work in the different subjects that you do is as carefully matched to your needs as it is in subjects like English, mathematics and science
- subject leaders take account of how everyone is doing in the different parts of the subject, when devising their improvement plans.

You can help by continuing to improve your behaviour and maintaining your excellent attendance. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis
Lead inspector

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