

National Institute of Conductive Education

Cannon Hill House, Russell Road, Birmingham, B13 8RD

Inspection dates

2–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

1

Pupils' achievement

Outstanding

1

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

1

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

1

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

1

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

1

Leadership and management

Outstanding

1

Summary of key findings

This school is outstanding because

- Pupils make outstanding progress in their awareness, knowledge and skills, in all their subjects as well as in overcoming the effects of their disabilities.
- They are taught exceptionally well by teachers whose strong subject knowledge is supplemented by thorough expertise in facilitating the learning and development of children with physical and neurological disabilities.
- The pupils' progress is made possible by the consistent implementation of an outstanding curriculum, which combines the very effective practice of Conductive Education with the full range of subject material specified by the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and development.
- Pupils work very hard, behave extremely well, support and encourage one another, and thoroughly enjoy their experience at school.
- The pupils, and their parents and carers, experience the school as a safe, supportive and caring learning environment where they are able to make the most of their potential for physical, personal and academic development.
- The outstanding and inspirational leadership provided by the headteacher, with very effective support from the proprietor and the board of trustees, has resulted in these excellent outcomes for the pupils and in overall improvement since the last inspection, including improved teaching and learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a day's notice. The inspector observed seven lessons taught by six different teachers, looked at pupils' work, and held meetings with the headteacher, the proprietor, staff members and pupils. He also met with some parents and carers.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress, monitoring reports of teaching and learning, records of staff appraisal, and staff training records.
- The views of seven parents and carers were taken into account, together those of the representative of one of the local authorities who place pupils at the school.
- Twelve questionnaire responses from staff were evaluated, as were those of ten pupils who had responded to the online Ofsted questionnaire using the Picture Communicative Symbols version of the questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Gush, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The National Institute of Conductive Education (NICE) is a co-educational independent day special school providing for the learning and development needs of children with physical disabilities and wide-ranging learning difficulties.
- The school, situated in purpose-built premises in Birmingham, opened in 1987 and is registered for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years old.
- Pupils can attend full time, part time or for a fixed block of time (often for two weeks repeated annually). The part-time pupils attend other schools for the rest of their education.
- There are currently 19 pupils on roll, of whom five attend full-time. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and none are in the care of their local authority.
- In the Early Intervention Group, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside those who are of statutory school age but are developmentally young. Currently, none of the children are in receipt of nursery funding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school makes use of the practice of Conductive Education and aims to help children to overcome problems with movement and, in so doing, to extend their potential for academic learning and personal development, leading to more active and independent lives.
- The last inspection of NICE was in June 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop and extend processes to monitor and track pupils' progress in all areas of their learning and development, with particular emphasis on the pupils who attend the school on a part-time basis.
- Continue to work with international partners to refine the processes used for measuring the gains the pupils make in their physical development.
- Enhance the effectiveness of arrangements for performance management of staff by conducting a regular audit of procedures used and outcomes recorded.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Outstanding

The achievement of pupils in both the school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The outstanding teaching and the innovative use of an exceptional curriculum enable pupils to make the best use of their potential and to overcome some of the effects of their disabling conditions. Pupils learn to make the most of their capacity for physical mobility and at the same time they acquire awareness, knowledge and skills across the range of National Curriculum subjects and the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and development, in particular literacy and numeracy. Those who are new to the school, and those returning following absence due to illness or surgery, make up ground quickly both in terms of academic results and in their confidence and willingness to learn. All pupils achieve exceptionally well. The achievement of many of the full-time pupils in recent years has progressed at a rate that substantially exceeds the national average.

Pupils visibly enjoy their lessons. They work hard at the physical tasks in their Conductive Education programmes and they engage very well with the subject content in their lessons. They take great pride in their work and are very effective users of equipment and technology. This includes a wide range of information and communication technology, as well as individually adapted mobility aids and communication devices. Their acquisition of basic skills and the very effective way that pupils develop their personal qualities equip them well for their next stage of their education and for adult life. When asked about what he liked most about the school, one pupil said, 'It makes me strong and independent.'

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are enthusiastic about school and about learning. They say, or use their communication aids to indicate, that they thoroughly enjoy coming to school and their behaviour demonstrates this. They support one another in overcoming their various barriers to learning. In particular, they have learned to take turns and to wait so that everyone, irrespective of difficulties with speech or mobility, has the opportunity to take an active part in the various activities of the lessons. In this they are ably supported by the team of highly trained and expert teachers and facilitators in both of the school's class groups, the School Group and the Early Intervention Group that includes children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Excellent and sensitive use of behaviour plans, together with an incentive scheme, helps those pupils whose impulsive behaviour could impede their progress and that of others in their class. Carefully maintained records of learning and behaviour show significant improvements in pupils' self-confidence and these results are confirmed by comments from parents and carers. For some this takes place gradually over a period of years, while for those who transfer to the school from other provision, it can be rapid.

The school makes outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. The whole staff team promote an ethos of mutual understanding and respect very well. This supports pupils in adopting these attitudes in their own lives and experiencing the beneficial impact they can have on the lives of others. In English and religious education lessons they gain very good awareness of other cultures from stories and role-plays from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds, and from using costumes from those cultures. Strong links and partnerships have been developed with other schools in the locality, where children attend from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. This includes, for example, shared work on an arts programme. These activities promote pupils' awareness of other cultures and help them to develop an attitude of tolerance. The school helps pupils to learn about British institutions and services through the subject content in their English lessons as well as through visits from local police liaison officers, and the special education adviser from the West Midlands Fire Service. Pupils develop very good

relations with the local community through visits to local amenities, for example to the local supermarkets and the park that is adjacent to the school. They also visit the Safeside project where they learn to stay safe in public areas. The school has developed a policy to ensure that, whenever it is appropriate to introduce political issues, balanced messages are promoted.

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

The quality of teaching is outstanding and this enables pupils to make exceptional gains in their learning as well as in their physical development, both in lessons and over time. Teachers have high expectations as to what pupils can achieve, and plan lessons carefully and in detail. They address the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs very well in respect of their physical, personal and academic needs. They use their expert knowledge of physical disability and of the practice of Conductive Education to ensure that all pupils have maximum opportunities to learn to the best of their ability. In addition, they use their subject knowledge extremely well to enthuse pupils, and they make excellent use of a wide range of resources to produce stimulating and well-paced lessons that retain pupils' interest and engagement.

Both of the school's learning groups have a team of facilitators. They are all graduates in Conductive Education and most of them are qualified teachers. While one teaches the lesson the others supply expert facilitation, providing valuable support for pupils' physical development and encouraging their academic learning.

Teachers use on-going assessment very effectively. They have a thorough knowledge of the physical conditions, the academic abilities and the learning targets of individual pupils, and they plan lessons to specifically meet their differing needs. Pupils' progress in each of the subject areas of the National curriculum and of the areas of learning and development of the Early Years Foundation Stage is carefully measured and recorded. The accuracy of the teachers' assessments is ensured by effective moderation by other staff. In partnership with international colleagues, the school is developing a very effective process for measuring the gains the pupils make in their physical development. Teachers are also developing the processes used to assess and record the outcomes of part time pupils to ensure that they are as effective as those used for the full-time pupils.

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

The curriculum is outstanding. The very clear curriculum policy explains how the Conductive Education programmes are combined with the subject material of the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and development. This provides a highly effective framework for the pupils' experience in school. The curriculum, and the way that it is implemented, ensures that the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs are fulfilled.

During the programmes, pupils benefit from repeatedly taking part in carefully designed physical tasks, tailored to their individual conditions, which help them to develop movement habits that make the most of their potential for mobility. While pupils engage in the physical tasks, teachers successfully weave in subject material from the academic curriculum, stimulating pupils' interest and consistently reinforcing learning. An example of very effective practice from the Early Intervention Group involved pupils stretching to discover hidden 'jelly fish' during a programme combining lying tasks with an understanding the world topic on 'Out at sea'. During subject lessons, pupils regularly reinforce the postures and movements learned in the programmes. Examples from the School Group include the careful fine manipulation required to pour 'magic potions' during a mathematics lesson on measuring and estimating volumes; and the correct standing and walking routines used when a pupil went to use a computer to write an assignment during an English lesson. In addition, valuable emphasis is placed on the development of appropriate habits for daily life, such as independent dressing (all pupils change into the school

uniform at school every day) and using the toilet.

The Early Intervention Group, whose primary focus on physical development, communication and language is agreed with parents and carers, provides an excellent start to pupils' learning experience. The very effective communication and information sharing with the part-time pupils' other schools ensures that no repetition takes place.

Personal, social and health education (PHSE) is very effectively integrated through all the subjects, including religious education and the Conductive Education programmes. It is supplemented by the many visits that enhance the curriculum. These include visiting the Central Mosque and the local dentist. A very good range of outdoor play equipment is well used by children in the Early Intervention Group while the School Group also enjoy basketball and outdoor bowling. The importance of a healthy diet is emphasised in the curriculum for both science and PHSE, and pupils enjoy high quality healthy lunches provided by the school every day.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

The provision that the school makes for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is outstanding. All of the regulations for independent schools are met. The pupils experience the school as a safe, supporting and caring environment and confidently place their trust in the teachers and facilitators. Parents and carers very much appreciate the efforts that the school makes to ensure rapid and effective communication, and say that their children feel safe and free from any bullying or harassment while they are in school.

Staff are persistent in their attention to detail in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the pupils. Excellent hygiene and cleanliness are scrupulously maintained, and thorough and detailed daily checks of all classrooms, facilities and equipment are made to ensure pupils' health and welfare. All members of staff are consistently careful and courteous in the way that they support and handle pupils as they work to improve their physical development. The pupils are supervised consistently and effectively at all times, and the procedures used to ensure their health and safety on educational trips and visits are exemplary.

Robust attention is paid to all aspects of staff recruitment and the required records about the checks made on staff and other adults are carefully maintained. Staff training in child protection, fire safety and first aid is thorough and regularly refreshed. This includes the training of the designated safeguarding officer to the required advanced level.

The school's high level of commitment to pupils' wellbeing is characterised by the rigorous attention paid to the extensive and thorough policy framework. Policies are regularly reviewed. The review process is thorough and involves presentations by staff groups, consultation with parents and carers, with sign-off by the board of trustees. This ensures that policies remain appropriate, that everyone in the school community is aware of them and that staff members consistently implement them.

Leadership and management

Outstanding

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and very effective day-to-day management. This makes possible the high quality outcomes for the school's pupils and ensures that all the standards for independent schools are met. Through termly observations of lessons and programmes, and very effective annual appraisal meetings, the headteacher and senior team monitor consistently encourage improvement in the contribution that staff members make to the pupil progress. Self-evaluation is detailed, robust and accurate, and regularly shared with the proprietor and board of trustees whose comments and suggestions are welcomed and incorporated as appropriate. Detailed quarterly

reports from the headteacher ensure that the trustees are aware of all aspects of the school's performance. The proprietor recognises that there is still room for improvement in the way that the processes used for managing staff performance are audited.

The proprietor has provided high quality facilities for the school. The purpose-built school building contains a wide range of specialist equipment and facilities, including very well resourced classrooms supplied with excellent information and communication technology resources.

All the required information is provided or made available for parents, carers and others through the school's website, its brochures, and the extensive parent information pack. Parents and carers are aware of the school's complaints procedures. These meet requirements and are well implemented.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	103588
Inspection number	422692
DfE registration number	330/6080

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Number of part time pupils	14
Proprietor	Roger David Wood
Headteacher	Wendy Baker
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,160 to £44,363 per annum
Telephone number	0121 449 1569
Email address	foundation@conductive-education.org.uk

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