

# Dame Hannah Rogers School

Woodland Road, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 9HQ

## Inspection dates

9–10 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher's determined leadership has driven the school forward at a good pace. As a result, the school has improved well since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The strong sense of community within the school results in a staff team that works closely together to enable pupils to develop their skills well.
- Staff members' very secure knowledge of pupils' special educational and medical needs is used well to plan pupils' learning experiences. Because of this, each individual's needs are met within the wide range of activities.
- Pupils make good progress, particularly in the use of technology to support their communication skills. They concentrate for increasingly longer periods of time and work hard in lessons.
- Pupils' health and well-being is a priority for the school. Pupils are very well cared for. The work of the therapy and medical teams is effectively entwined within pupils' education so that their learning targets are promoted well in all activities.
- The very welcoming environment is calm and purposeful and pupils show real delight as they arrive to school and participate in activities.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. All staff are well trained in keeping pupils safe and are vigilant in ensuring that any concerns are reported to the relevant staff.
- Governors have responded effectively to the support they have received since the previous inspection. Systems are now more robust to ensure that they are well informed and challenge the school.
- Pupils' progress is occasionally slowed because extension tasks do not stretch pupils sufficiently, particularly for the most able pupils. Teachers do not use the information they have to move learning on quickly enough if pupils have achieved their targets.
- Governors are not gaining sufficient information on the strengths and weaknesses of the school from the new approach to reporting. This reduces their ability to plan for key areas of development.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's website meets requirements in reporting how the school spends government funding.
- Students in post-16 provision make good progress in their learning and achieve well in the courses they undertake.

## **Full report**

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

- Improve pupils' progress further by:
  - ensuring that pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged in lessons
  - reviewing pupils' progress to ensure that pupils are moved on to fresh targets when they have achieved new skills.
- Revise the reporting of the school's effectiveness so that it provides a sharper analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement and enables governors to plan more effectively for improvement.
- Ensure that the school's website meets requirements in relation to the reporting on the use of additional government funding.

# **Inspection judgements**

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

**Good**

- The headteacher and staff have established a culture of high expectations that applies to everyone. Staff refuse to accept a 'can't do' approach, and this is enabling pupils to make good, and on occasions outstanding, progress.
- Quick, decisive action after the inspection in 2014 enabled the school to address the concerns raised. Policies and processes now ensure that pupils are safe and governors are more robust in holding leaders to account. Leaders have ensured that the pace of change has been maintained and that the school continues to develop and improve.
- The headteacher's monitoring of all aspects of the school is well established and accurate. This is evident, for example, in the monitoring of teaching, where precise feedback pinpoints the areas for improvement required. The robust systems ensure that the headteacher and staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Until very recently, school improvement plans have been detailed with clear timelines. However, leaders and governors have identified that the new approach for self-evaluation, trialled this term, does not provide the information they need to bring about sharply focused improvements. The school is revising its reporting arrangements to ensure that it clearly outlines the strengths and areas of improvement to inform plans for development.
- The appointment of a senior teacher has provided more support for the headteacher and enabled the school to develop its monitoring systems further. Recently established processes are designed to hold staff more closely to account for pupil achievement and ensure that pupils progress at a more rapid rate.
- The staff team is very well trained to support pupils' special educational and medical needs effectively. The successful use of the performance management processes ensures a good breadth of skills. Staff at all levels are continually developing their knowledge and understanding. This enables all adults to work confidently with pupils in providing a high level of education and care.
- Regular reviews of the curriculum ensure that it meets the needs of most pupils. The wide range of learning activities develops pupils' skills and provides them with many diverse experiences in communication, numeracy, humanities and the arts. The personal, social and health curriculum flows through all that is taught and provides a solid basis for pupils to develop their understanding of life skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well supported within the curriculum, and British values are promoted effectively. There are regular opportunities for pupils to reflect and take time to consider, particularly through the use of the various sensory rooms. The twice-weekly assemblies are used well to celebrate achievement but also to consider the plight of others and world events.
- Parents who responded to the Ofsted survey and spoke to the inspector were very positive about the work of the school and all that it has done for their children. They greatly value their children's achievements; one commented that the progress her child is making is because 'the learning is relevant'.

## Governance of the school

- Governors were quick to take on board the advice from the review of governance. As a result, they have improved their systems in supporting and challenging the school. They have made good use of the school improvement partner to develop the way they manage governor meetings.
- The governing body is a very knowledgeable group and includes a wide range of specialists. Their expertise, particularly in terms of pupils' special educational needs and safeguarding, has supported leaders effectively in establishing good processes that ensure pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The headteacher's regular reports ensure that governors are well informed, although the governing body does not accept anything at face value. Checks are made through visits to lessons and meetings with staff. There is a greater level of challenge, particularly about pupil progress and ensuring, for example, that children who are looked after are making the same progress as their peers.
- Governors make sure that additional government funding is used to good effect. They explained, for instance, how the sports funding supported pupils to go sailing and bowling and how pupil premium funding has been used to improve resources for learning. They have not, however, ensured that the website outlines how monies have been spent and the impact of spending.
- Trustees have regular meetings with governors and the headteacher in which they hold the school to account. Good attention is given to governors' reports, the headteacher's reports and those of the school improvement partner.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school recognises the vulnerability of its pupils and ensures that staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding to identify and report any concerns. There is regular and updated training and staff are aware of issues such as those regarding radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.
- The single central record is up to date and there are robust checks on staff suitability.
- The designated safeguarding lead is known to all staff and works closely with a range of agencies and with the children's home to ensure that pupils are safeguarded.
- The school works closely with parents to ensure that they are fully aware of all aspects of safeguarding. They have, for example, sent parents information about the 'Prevent' duty so that they are better informed about the dangers their children could face.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- There is excellent teamwork in all classes. Learning is planned effectively, with all staff using their knowledge of each pupil very well. This personalised approach to learning enables pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils' responses to learning activities and feedback are captured in detail by all staff. However, the information is not always used to provide extension activities for pupils, particularly the most able pupils, to increase their rates of progress even further.
- Staff know pupils well; they understand the very small nuances of movement, such as

a hand gesture, that are part of each pupil's method of communicating. The use of symbols, sign and communication aids support pupils effectively in conveying their needs. The close working relationship with the therapy teams ensures that pupils are well supported, both physically and in their communication, to access learning.

- Staff also use their knowledge and understanding of pupils effectively to devise activities and resources that meet the needs of individuals. A rich range of stimuli supports pupils' learning well. There is a lot of laughter and fun in lessons and pupils clearly enjoy the activities. For example, when using soundboards pupils enjoyed listening to a beat being covered and uncovered with netting material. They made good progress in predicting and responding to what was going to happen and showed pleasure through laughter, smiles or gesture during the activity.
- All staff are patient and persistent when challenging pupils to participate and learn. Teaching assistants encourage pupils, using eye contact effectively and repeating requests to keep pupils on task, such as when participating in Christmas card competitions. This approach builds pupils' resilience and stops them being distracted because they know they are expected to achieve and staff will not give up.
- Parents are very pleased with the quality of communication with staff. There are regular phone calls and discussions about how well their child is doing. Parents are welcomed into the school and invited, for example, to watch their child's speech and language session. Of particular value are the home-school books, which give a detailed account of all that has happened during the day. A parent commented that these were so detailed that 'I can visualise her day.'

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' joy in coming to school is tangible; they clearly enjoy all that goes on in school and have a very positive attitude to all the activities. The above-average attendance of pupils is affected only by their challenging health issues.
- Excellent attention is paid to ensuring pupils' dignity. Staff provide a constant dialogue with the pupils to keep them informed about what is happening and going on around them.
- Pupils have a strong voice through the school council. They make decisions about how to use their funding allocation and are active in raising funds for charities and deciding where this should go. Minutes of meetings also show that pupils are quick to challenge, such as asking what was happening to the environmental room.
- Pupils benefit from support in considering their next stage of education. Their choices are considered in Year 6 and again in Years 9, 10 and 11 through impartial careers advice, and parents and pupils are encouraged to look at a range of different provisions. Pupils also have support from an advocate from the National Youth Advisory service who ensures that their voice is heard.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector are confident that their children are safe in school. Very good attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are safe. Risk assessments for each pupil are detailed and trips out of school are well organised to ensure that pupils are safe and their medical needs are supported.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They interact well with adults and respond to their questions and comments through gesture or their communication aids.
- Pupils show increasing confidence to try different experiences and are clearly keen to take on new challenges. They develop their self-esteem and independence well.
- Over time, pupils adapt to staff's high expectations, particularly in managing their own behaviour and responses. For example, parents typically comment that their children improve greatly within a short time of starting at the school. They become a lot calmer and happier.
- A very small number of pupils who are new to the school are taking longer to adapt to the staff's expectations but are gradually developing the skills needed to self-manage and work in a group with other pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make good progress from very low starting points. They learn to communicate with those around them, making choices and expressing their ideas.
- Pupils' targets are well focused on the needs of individuals. As a result, pupils make good progress. Occasionally, teachers do not use the information they have to move learning on quickly enough if they have already achieved their targets.
- Pupils' use of technology is good and supported by an appropriate range of equipment. They use switches and boards to indicate choices or, for example, to turn on their radio. Pupils develop an understanding of cause and effect, such as when turning on a blender to grate carrots. They enjoyed the experience of touching the grated carrot afterwards and comparing it with a whole carrot.
- Pupils work hard to concentrate for longer periods. As a result, they make good progress in achieving their targets. For example, a young pupil had, by the end of the year, met her target to follow and copy actions and could do this without prompting.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities to develop their physical skills in rebound therapy and swimming, through the support of the occupational therapy and physiotherapy teams. The sensory rooms, including the sensory carpet, provide different settings for pupils to explore and respond to a range of stimuli.
- The systems to assess and record pupils' progress are being refined in line with the forthcoming national changes to measure pupils' progress. The school is working closely with other similar schools to ensure that their systems challenge all pupils to do the best they can.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to purchase resources and the increased time of speech and language therapists. This has made a positive impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in improving their communication skills.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Students in the sixth form make good progress. They follow an accredited course that meets their needs well. As a result, achievements are good. Students also undertake an arts award course and make good progress; some have achieved the first level and are moving on to the second level. The school is investigating opportunities for a wider

range of courses linked to vocational work such as land-based learning.

- Last year's information indicates that students made outstanding progress in their communication skills, building well on their achievements lower in the school. In other areas their progress was good, and these standards are being maintained for the current cohort.
- The well-planned curriculum provides students with skills that will support them in the next stage of their lives. The arts award and personal, social and health education sessions support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Students experience a wide range of activities in music and dance, including African themes. They have, for example, copied face paintings of Masai warriors and produced shadow shows featuring elephants.
- The good-quality careers advice and support continues in the sixth form and students are encouraged to visit different placements so that they and their families can make informed decisions about their future care settings.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The good knowledge and understanding of students' needs ensures that students are supported well. There are high expectations that they will achieve, and the level of challenge in the work that they undertake is good.
- Students' course folders are diligently maintained and contain good evidence of their achievements. Leaders are aware that the recording of students' progress against the targets in their education plans does not have the same level of detail and it is not always evident how well students have achieved.

## School details

Unique reference number	113653
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10019956

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	6
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Geoff Perham
Headteacher	Chris Freestone
Telephone number	01752 892 461
Website	<a href="http://www.discoverhannahs.org">www.discoverhannahs.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:education@discoverhannahs.org">education@discoverhannahs.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	26 January 2015

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its use of government funding on its website.
- Dame Hannah Rogers is a small school, which provides education for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Nearly all pupils are profoundly disabled, use non-verbal forms of communication and have complex medical and sensory impairments.
- The Nursery provision is being developed and does not have any children on roll.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs.

- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- No pupils attend off-site provision and the school does not use any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning throughout the school. These visits to lessons were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work folders in addition to reviewing the assessments and folders in their classes.
- Meetings and discussions were held with staff, speech and language therapists and occupational therapy teams, with the headteacher and senior teacher, the school's external consultant and the head of the children's home.
- A meeting was held with five members of the governing body.
- The inspector scrutinised the three responses received to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, and discussions were held with two parents.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation including: the school pre-employment checks on staff, records of the checks made on teaching, learning and assessment, the school's own assessment information, minutes of governors' meetings and the school's analysis of attendance, punctuality and behaviour incidents.
- The inspector considered the school's arrangements for the use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools and the pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils.

## Inspection team

Sarah Mascal, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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