



The Harbour School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 134193
LEA Cambridgeshire

Inspection number 274806
Inspection dates 9 - 10 June 2005
Reporting inspector Dr D Alan Dobbins

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Special	School address	Station Road
School category	Community special		Wilburton
Age range of pupils	5 - 14		Ely
			Cambridgeshire
			CB6 3RR
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01353 740229
Number on roll	58	Fax number	01353 740632
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Joan Maurice Smith
Date of previous inspection	No previous inspection	Headteacher	Mr John Steward

Age group	Published	Reference no.
5 - 14	July 2005	274806

© Crown copyright 2005

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the Harbour School and of the local education authority (LEA).

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school provides for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It opened in September 2003 as a result of the LEA's re-organisation of provision. It had a difficult beginning and was led by three headteachers in the first year. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2004. Of the 58 pupils on roll, 11 are residential. Fifty-five pupils are White-British and three are of Caribbean heritage. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. There is one traveller child and four pupils are in public care. Because of their learning difficulties, pupils' standards on entry are below that expected for their age. All pupils have statements of special educational need.

This is the school's first inspection by Ofsted, although its boarding provision was inspected by the Care Standards Commission in 2003 and 2004.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a good and rapidly developing school which, under the present headteacher, has made great strides after an unsettled start. As a result of the considerable improvement made in the current academic year, the school provides good value for money and its capacity for continued improvement is good.

The school considers itself to be satisfactory. Inspectors judge that it is a good school. This is because of the outstanding success achieved since the appointment of the headteacher in dealing with pupils' behavioural and emotional difficulties, making the school a calm and orderly place where pupils can learn well. Parents are pleased with the way their children are becoming increasingly grown up and responsible. The main weaknesses have already been identified by the school. In Years 7 and 8, especially, the curriculum should be adjusted to make a better match with the needs of pupils. More improvement is required in personal, social and health education and more needs to be done to ensure that the national drive to improve standards of numeracy and literacy is reflected in the work of the school. Now that the headteacher has set the standards, the time has come for other senior managers, subject co-ordinators and governors to be more influential in running the school, especially in checking the quality of the work.

Grade: 2

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

The latest inspection report by the Care Standards Commission (October 2004) shows good improvement from the previous report. It recognises that almost all of the National Minimal Standards are satisfactorily met, and that many are met beyond the minimum required level. Since then, the school has given good attention to implementing each of the recommendations.

The well-established routines and the good relationships with care staff ensure that pupils are well cared for, are happy and that the residential provision makes a good contribution to the work of the school. The good procedures for handover at the beginning and end of each day are effective in alerting staff to any difficulties or successes that may affect pupils' attitudes, either to their work in the school or to the way they behave in the residence.

The boarding curriculum is planned well. Pupils take a full part in a good range of activities that are aimed, primarily, at developing their personal and social skills and their enjoyment of learning. They are successfully encouraged to

develop their independence, for example, by taking part in a good range of activities in the grounds, such as BMX and mountain biking and by learning to cook. They regularly visit the local community to shop and use other local facilities, and some attend the local youth club.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum, especially for pupils in Years 7 and 8, to match their learning and other needs.
- Increase the opportunities and raise the expectations of senior managers and subject co-ordinators so that they can play a more prominent role in managing the school.
- Increase the role of governors in leading, managing and challenging the school to influence school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Pupils make good progress in dealing with the difficulties they have in controlling their behaviour and their emotions. Since September 2004, the school has maintained detailed records gained from a half-termly test of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning, to others and to themselves. These show the considerable progress they make in becoming mature and responsible and, for many, in gaining in self-esteem and self-confidence. The reduction in the number of incidents and the increasing number of points awarded weekly for good behaviour are positive evidence that the longer pupils are at the school, the better their attitudes to learning become. With this fresh start, many enjoy learning again.

From the information available in pupils' files and evidence gained from lessons, the progress pupils are making in subjects is good, particularly so for pupils in Years 1 to 6. In time, a more detailed picture of their achievement and progress will be possible because of the good procedures that have now been established. For example, pupils are tested on their ability in reading and number when they join the school and progress against those standards is measured by tests given mid-way through the year and at the end of the year.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Pupils feel safe at school and behave well. They are keen to learn and they enjoy most of their lessons. Attendance is good. It is better than the national picture for equivalent schools. Since September 2004, there have been no exclusions. This represents a radical improvement on the previous year.

Pupils feel valued because they consider that their voice is heard. There is no school council, but pupils' feelings about the school are made known to the headteacher through the weekly 'tea and biscuits' meetings with the eight pupils who, in the previous week, gained the most points for good behaviour. Pupils find the experience both enjoyable and worthwhile as they report that the headteacher appreciates hearing what they like about the school and often acts on features where they think improvements can be made. As a result of these meetings, lunchtime clubs for fitness work, drums, dance, swimming and using computers have been started, and additional play equipment has been purchased for the grounds.

Spiritual awareness is increased through singing hymns and moments of reflection during the weekly assemblies and pupils have sufficient opportunities to learn about their own culture and that of others. The very good provision for moral and social development permeates all the work of the school and is helped considerably by the good relationships between staff and pupils.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. In most lessons, pupils behave very well and make a strong effort to do their best. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, classroom assistants are used well and lessons are well planned to meet the learning needs and capabilities of each pupil. For example, in a lesson in geography the good relationships allowed pupils to ask questions confidently and be fully involved in the discussions that followed. The teaching assistant was very effective in teaching a small group of pupils, which meant that the teacher could provide more information on the link between climate and lifestyle for the highest attaining pupils. In this lesson, the learning needs of all pupils were catered for well and all pupils made similar progress. However, in certain lessons, too much time is taken reminding pupils of their responsibilities as learners, which slows down the pace of learning and limits what they achieve.

Too many of the lessons for pupils in Years 7 and 8 are taught by teachers with too little specialist knowledge of the subject and their planning in some subjects does not always result in tasks that match well with pupils needs. The school recognises this and, in design and technology and physical education, positive steps have been taken to limit the effect of this by arranging for pupils to take lessons in the local secondary school taught by specialist teachers. Nevertheless, lessons in English, mathematics, geography and history are taught by those without sufficient specialist knowledge or training in the subjects.

Grade: 2**Curriculum and other activities**

The range of subjects is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Work is varied and interesting. The development of pupils' personal and social skills and the importance of living safe and healthy lives are primary aims, and are emphasised in all aspects of the school's work. The planned programme for personal, social and health education is supported very well throughout the school day. For example, speech and occupational therapists, social workers, careers advisers and the youth offending team all make very positive contributions to pupils' progress. Visiting artists and drama and dance groups, and other visitors from the community, such as from the fire and police services, help make school work varied and motivating. Pupils who board gain additional benefit from taking part in the good range of evening activities.

Areas of work that can be strengthened have already been accurately identified by the school through its process of review. These mostly relate to the work that pupils undertake in Years 7 and 8 and the need for as much specialist teaching as possible. The school knows that the planned programme for personal, social and health education needs further improvement so that it is increasingly effective in meeting pupils' primary needs. Having identified this as an area to develop, the school has acted and appointed a child psychotherapist to strengthen further the existing procedures to improve pupils' behaviour and the control of their emotions.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

This aspect of the school is outstanding and is a major strength. One of the key outcomes of the high quality of care, guidance and support throughout the whole school is that pupils are helped to make much better progress in their learning than was the case in their previous schools. A small number of pupils make such good progress in both their personal and social development and in their learning, that they successfully return to mainstream schools.

Because pupils soon realise that staff are there to help them manage their behavioural and emotional difficulties they quickly learn to trust them, feel valued and safe and have no hesitation in confiding in them and seeking their help and guidance. Staff know the pupils very well and work very hard and successfully in providing for their needs. Such an atmosphere gives pupils a sense of security for re-thinking their attitudes to themselves, to school and to their learning. The importance of this is reinforced well in lessons in personal and social education, and in assemblies. At break and lunchtimes, support is always on hand to ensure that pupils benefit from the social interaction.

For about a fifth of the pupils, their boarding experience at the school and the quality of support offered, makes an especially important contribution. It helps them learn how to get on with others and how to manage their own behaviour to ensure this.

The school's procedures for health and safety are very well established into the routines. Risk assessments are in place for each pupil and situation. All members of staff receive regular training in child protection. They keep detailed records of pupils, including noting any mood changes. The incident book contains very good descriptions of what happened and how the incident was resolved. The requirements for children in care are complied with.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has made an excellent start. He took over a school in which the behaviour of pupils regularly prevented them from learning. As a result of measures taken, that is no longer the case. The headteacher's first priority was to establish a school in which learning could occur without the hindrance of repeated disruption and that has been fully achieved.

His aspirations for making the school an outstanding school within the near future are clear to staff and pupils alike. He has won over the staff, pupils and governors and all are fully behind him in his quest to continue improvement so that the school becomes wholly effective in all of its work. However, the remarkable rate of improvement can only be maintained if other senior managers and others, such as the subject co-ordinators, share the load. They are better placed to do this because of the much reduced absence rate of staff and their improved morale.

The headteacher knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well and has a good development plan that builds on the strengths whilst tackling the weaknesses. The plans to improve the accommodation, to develop the curriculum by increasing the links with other schools, and to train teachers in specialist subject knowledge, are good.

A good start has been made in establishing some procedures to check the work of the school. For example, those for checking teaching and learning are already having a positive effect. Evidence of the effectiveness of the evaluation of teaching was seen during the inspection when, in lessons jointly observed, the headteacher and inspectors reached the same judgements. His regular sampling of completed work provides additional information on the progress of pupils. The fact that procedures for judging other aspects of the school's work have only been recently established, such as measuring pupils' progress more accurately, is understandable given that there has been so much to do, but the positive progress on that front, as elsewhere, bodes well for the future.

Governance is satisfactory. The chairperson of the governors is very supportive of the headteacher and, as a result of her regular visits, has an accurate picture of the improvements made. However, because many of the governors are new, the governing body is taking time to find its feet and to make its full contribution to influencing development.

Grade: 2

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about HMI-led Ofsted inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16-19
---	-----------------------	--------------

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Y	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	2	
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	4	
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	0	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	
How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?	1	

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Y	

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	Yes/No/NA
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	Yes/No/NA
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
How well learners enjoy and achieve	Yes/No/NA
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Yes
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Yes/No/NA
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Yes/No/NA
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Yes
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	Yes

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 0207 421 6800
F 0207 421 6707
www.ofsted.gov.uk



The Harbour School
Station Road
Wilburton
Ely, Cambridgeshire
CB6 3RR

17 June 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the friendly way in which you dealt with Mr Tombs and me when we visited you on Thursday and Friday the 9th and 10th of June, 2005, to inspect your school. In this letter I would like to tell you about our findings.

We think that The Harbour School is improving very quickly, and is now a good school.

What we most like about your school

- We think that your school is calm, ordered and well organised, which means that you can get on with your learning.
- We think your behaviour is good and you get on very well with the staff and with each other. This is very encouraging because we know how hard some of you have to try to always behave well.
- Because of good teaching in your lessons, we can see you are making progress and learning the skills you will need later in life. We think the staff, and others who come to the school, are extremely good at advising and guiding you.
- Your headteacher has made a huge difference to your school since he joined the school at the beginning of this year. All the staff are working very hard to help him make the school even better.
- We think the quality of the boarding provision is good and you have a good range of interesting things to do in the evenings - you told us good things about several of them.
- Your parents and carers are right to think well of the school. We fully agree with them.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Those of you in Years 7 and 8 need more interesting lessons in a few subjects.
- We want your teachers to keep an even closer eye on how well you are all doing in your lessons.

Best wishes for the future and please keep working hard to do your best at all times.

Dr D Alan Dobbins, Clive Tombs