



# Calthorpe School Sports College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103604  
**LEA** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 276957  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Sarah Mascall RISP

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

|                                    |                    |                           |                                   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Special            | <b>School address</b>     | Darwin Street                     |
| <b>School category</b>             | Community special  |                           | Highgate                          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 2 to 19            |                           | Birmingham, West Midlands B12 0TJ |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 0121 7734637                      |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 266                | <b>Fax number</b>         | 0121 7734637                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body | <b>Chair of governors</b> |                                   |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 3 April 2000       | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mr Graham Hardy                   |

|                             |   |                                    |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>2 to 19 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>12 October 2005 -<br>13 October 2005 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>276957 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Calthorpe School caters for children and students with complex special needs from all over the city of Birmingham. The majority have severe or profound multiple learning difficulties. Twenty percent have autistic spectrum disorders and several students have challenging behaviours. A number of students also have sensory impairments. There are 267 students in all, between the ages of 2 and 19. For 167 students English is an additional language. All students have statements of special educational need and 12 students are looked after by the local authority. The school was designated a joint specialist sports college in 2000 and received single status redesignation (with science as a second subject) in 2004. The school has satellite units based at two local mainstream schools.

The school has achieved a vast number of awards including in this year alone; Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark - Primary and Secondary, Sports Mark and Healthy Schools Award.

The term 'students' is used by the school to cover all students across the age range.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Calthorpe is an exceptional school. It achieves its success through the hard work of all staff under the exceptional leadership of the headteacher who empowers staff to take on and develop their ideas and initiatives. As a result students are provided with the very highest quality of education.

Children make a very good start in the nursery and very good teaching ensures that students continue to make very good progress as they get older. They make outstanding progress in their physical development and in science because of the excellent teaching in these areas. The outstanding curriculum offers a huge range of experiences that prepare students extremely well for life when they leave school. There are excellent links with mainstream schools and the community.

Students gain from the many opportunities to develop their independence and social skills and as a result make excellent progress in their personal development. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are excellent. The school has many very positive initiatives that promote students' healthy lifestyles. The care and guidance of students is excellent and considerable attention is given to the needs of each individual student. This is much appreciated by parents who are overwhelmingly positive about the school and what it has done for them and their children.

The headteacher is very well supported by his leadership team who carry out their roles and responsibilities extremely well. The newly established governing body is satisfactory and is developing its role to help it better understand the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The school is very self critical and is very aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. However it only evaluates itself as good; the inspection team disagree with this evaluation and feel the school's effectiveness is outstanding. It has an excellent capacity to improve and provides excellent value for money.

Grade: 1

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

Grade: 1

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop the role of the governing body by establishing methods to check the quality of what is offered to students so that it has a better understanding of the strength and weaknesses of the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Students, regardless of their special needs, make very good progress in their learning because of the very high expectations of staff. The school sets itself challenging targets for Years 3 –11 which it meets very well and sometimes exceeds.

From the moment they start school children learn to respond to a range of stimuli. They react to light and sound and develop their skills considerably well. As they progress through the school they make very good gains in their literacy and numeracy skills and excellent progress in science and physical education. All students make very good progress in their communication skills because staff encourage them to communicate. Many recognise symbols and can respond to signs.

In Year 11 and in Post 16 students achieve passes in national examinations including Accreditation for Life-Long Learning. An indicator of success is the number of students successfully placed into mainstream schools. Students from ethnic minority groups make the same progress as their peers and are very well supported to develop their communication skills. Staff make every effort to use students' home language such as singing the hello song in Urdu.

Parents feel very involved in supporting their children's education and are extremely positive about their progress.

Grade: 1

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being is a high priority for all staff and an outstanding feature of the school. The enjoyment students get from being in school is obvious and it is reflected by their good attendance. One parent commented that her son 'begs to come to school'. Students respond well to the laughter and good humour all around them. The main cause of absences is medical needs.

Students work very hard in school and remain attentive for long periods. Their behaviour is exemplary. They understand the rules well and respond very positively to rewards for hard work and good behaviour. Students play an active role in the school. The school council is a very effective group, and shows a good understanding of what it wants to improve. The excellent relationships and the respect with which staff treat students ensures that students become confident young people who feel safe and secure in the school. They develop excellent social skills and know how to greet people and introduce themselves. By the time they leave school students have grown into mature, sensible young adults.

Staff provide many opportunities for students to reflect about themselves and others. There are very good opportunities for students to celebrate success and assemblies are very effective in raising their awareness of the difficulties of others. The superb sports facilities and focus on developing students' understanding of healthy living ensures that students know how to stay fit and healthy and what is best to eat. Many

make use of the school's facilities in lunchtimes and after school to improve their fitness. Students are very much involved in the community and recently won an award for helping the elderly develop healthy lifestyles. As they get older students develop a very good understanding of business skills and the world of work through activities such as the mini enterprise scheme.

Grade: 1

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 1**

The exceptional commitment of staff to provide a stimulating environment for learning ensures that students make very good progress. Staff have excellent subject knowledge, particularly in PE and science, enabling them to develop students' skills in a structured way. All staff use their very good understanding of students' particular needs to provide a range of different experiences that extend students' learning. Very good team work between teachers and teaching assistants ensures students' needs are met very well. Teaching assistants are very clear about their roles; they step in quickly with questions and prompts in class and work with individuals, for example in the sensory rooms. Teachers plan well for students' individual needs, devising activities and support so all students can progress in their own way. Signing and symbols are used extremely well by all staff and students are encouraged to communicate as soon as they arrive in school.

Teachers use questioning very well to check that students understand what they are doing. Assessment procedures are very good. Effective marking and recording of students' work give the school a very clear picture of students' progress. It is now developing ways of checking the progress of groups of students such as by gender or ethnicity.

Grade: 1

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

The curriculum provides an outstanding range of experiences, which enable students to make very good progress. There is a very good focus on developing literacy, numeracy and communication skills. The range of examinations students take is good and is being developed further. For example students are undertaking ASDAN courses this year and there are appropriate plans to introduce Entry Level accreditation in physical education. There is an excellent focus on students' physical development with opportunities for students to develop their skills in an exceptional range of activities and have booster sessions in activities such as rebound therapy. The opportunities for students to work beside mainstream students are outstanding and is of tremendous benefit to all those involved.

The programme for personal social and health development and citizenship is excellent and underpins everything the school does. Students in Year 11 and Post 16 have a very good curriculum matched to their individual needs, which enables them to prepare well for life out of school. There are very good opportunities for students to learn about the world of work and participate in work experience placements.

Activities to support the curriculum are very good. There are many lunchtime and after school activities that enable students to develop a range of skills particularly linked to physical and cultural development. Teachers take every opportunity to ensure students have practical experiences during lessons such as visiting parks to study mini beasts or garden centres to look at plants. However the school recognises it needs a more effective system to collate details of these visits so that it can monitor the opportunities students are given in their time at school. The school contributes to the community in many ways, not least by offering adult education classes and providing access to its facilities.

Grade: 1

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

The high standard of care and support for students is summarised by a parent who said 'staff are second parents'. Students are cared for exceptionally well because staff always consider what is best for each individual. Outstanding attention to detail has been given to each students' needs, be they medical, behavioural, sensory or learning. Systems to ensure that students are safe, including risk assessments and child protection, are thorough. For example, each student has a relevant individual risk assessment in place which is shared with every adult with whom he or she has daily contact. Staff have access to a very good range of training which ensures that the exemplary standards of care and guidance are maintained. The focus on healthy lifestyles is the basis of everything the school does and strives towards. For example, students have a physical or fitness target which they know about and work towards.

A considerable strength is the way that all staff work together. The multi –agency professional team meets on a weekly basis to review all arrangements for supporting families and students. Communication amongst all those involved is excellent. Information is shared frequently, both formally and informally, creating a detailed picture of each student that is constantly being evaluated. Grade: 1

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

Leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school constantly looks for ways to do its job even better. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and his team are the driving force behind this. They have achieved this with the support of staff who work extremely hard and are very well motivated. This is evident throughout the school and there is a real sense of team work amongst staff. Parents

feel the school is excellent and recognise the hard work of staff, as one commented, 'the school is one big family'.

The roles and responsibilities of staff are very clear and are carried out very well. The school has rigorous systems to monitor and ensure the quality of its work. These provide a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement throughout the school, both in subjects and departments. The very detailed school improvement plan reflects this exceptional awareness of what needs to be done to improve. Staff are always seeking ways to improve their practice and there are many initiatives underway. Several involve other schools and the local community and are greatly valued by all these involved.

Many of the governors are new. They provide effective support for the headteacher, for example in personnel issues, but do not as yet provide sufficient challenge, particularly on curriculum issues. A curriculum committee has recently been established and there are plans to link governors to core subjects and phases within the school. Finance is managed extremely well and as a result the school is extremely well resourced both in terms of staffing and facilities.

Grade: 1



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## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |              |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | <b>School Overall</b> | <b>16-19</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 1 | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 4 | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 1 |   |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 1 | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |   |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |   |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |   |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |   |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |   |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 |   |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 1 |   |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |   |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 1 | 1 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 1 | 1 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 1 | 1 |

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 1   | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |     |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review      | 1   |     |
| 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  | 1   |     |
| 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  | Yes | Yes |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>  |     |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily  | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise  | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse   | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>   |     |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements                                   | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place  | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism                                | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>  |     |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships   | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them                   | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>                           |     |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills  | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams                                  | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form          | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy               | Yes |

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 October 2005

Dear Students

Thank you for making my team and I so welcome in your school. We very much enjoyed meeting and talking to you over the two days. We very much liked your school and we were very impressed by how many of you take an interest in staying fit and healthy and hope you will continue with this.

You are very lucky to attend such an excellent school and these are the things we liked best:

The headteacher and the senior staff are excellent and make sure the school runs very well.

You clearly like coming to school and work very hard.

You have very good teachers and because of this you learn a great deal.

You are able to work with lots of students from other schools and this helps you to learn even more and make new friends.

The facilities in the school such as the swimming pool and gym are excellent and have ensured that you understand how to be healthy.

To make things even better we have suggested one thing that the school should now do:

Your school governors need to have a better understanding of what happens in school so that they can make sure that you are getting the best possible education.

Thank you again for all your help. We wish you all well for the future.

Sarah

Sarah J Mascal (Lead inspector)