



# Halesbury School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103881  
**LEA** Dudley  
**Inspection number** 277021  
**Inspection dates** 14 June 2006 to 14 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Charles Hackett AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Feldon Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Halesowen
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16		West Midlands B62 9DR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818630
<b>Number on roll</b>	107	<b>Fax number</b>	01384 818631
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Pam Partridge
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 July 2004	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Winstone

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277021
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 Education Act 2005, 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 carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Halesbury School provides education for pupils with statements of special educational need. Previously all pupils admitted had moderate learning difficulties but pupils admitted now have more complex learning and behavioural difficulties and disabilities. As a result of these, their attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average.

Following an unsettled period when the school was under temporary leadership, it was inspected in 2004 and judged to have serious weaknesses. Since that inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and changes have been made to the governing body. The school has been subject to a number of recommendations, including closure, as part of the Local Authority special needs review, and at this stage is unsure about its long-term future. It is currently undergoing a programme of refurbishing the accommodation.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Halesbury is a satisfactory special school with many good features. Following its unsettled history the school is increasing its effectiveness and has the capacity to improve even further. Leadership and management are good and the newly appointed headteacher has played a pivotal role in bringing about improvements. She has managed the changes required very effectively, as well as ensuring that previous strengths in relation to aspects such as personal development and care have been maintained and developed further. A key strength has been the manner in which the school has evaluated its effectiveness, which has led to it gaining an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses.

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and improving. Systems have been introduced to record and analyse achievements, although they are not yet sufficiently embedded in practice for the school to clearly know pupils' rates of progress in all subjects. In seeking to improve pupils' achievements, the quality of teaching and learning has been carefully monitored and inspectors concur with the view that good practice exists in some areas. Weaker aspects have also been accurately identified and these include teachers not always planning to meet the different ability levels of pupils in each class. Additionally, not all staff have developed the knowledge and skills to successfully address the more complex difficulties of pupils now being admitted. A strong emphasis has been put on developing and extending the curriculum and, as a result, this is now of good quality, particularly in preparing pupils for life after leaving school. It is much improved from the time of the previous inspection.

Pupils' personal development is good as a result of the high standard of care and support, which is well focused on their different specific special needs, and which ensures that pupils are safe and healthy. Pupils enjoy being in the school and their above-average attendance records are testament to this. They readily express how the school has helped them, making comments such as, 'I understand people's feelings better by coming here'. They know they are listened to and through the School Council make important suggestions to bring about improvements. Parents are complimentary about the school, as exemplified by the comments of one parent: 'The school provides a happy, friendly and safe environment which gives my child the best'.

Governors have played an important role in the school's development. They have a very clear idea of its strengths and weaknesses and, together with senior staff, have risen above the uncertainty around the school's future to strive to ensure those pupils in the school now are being well served. Value for money is satisfactory and underspent money from previous years is being used well to improve the accommodation. 'The science room is better, it used to be horrible before' is the view of one child on one of the improved classrooms.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the systems for recording and analysing pupils' progress so that the information can be used to improve lesson planning.

- Raise the overall quality of teaching by sharing the good practice already evident in some classes.
- Further extend the knowledge and skills of staff in relation to the more complex learning and behaviour difficulties and disabilities of pupils now being admitted to the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and improving. Reviews of individual case studies of pupils and details of improvements in reading testify to this, but the records that track pupils' progress from when they entered the school are less informative. A start has been made, however, in analysing these to check how well pupils are doing. It is early in the process but the data generated shows that progress for all pupils is at least satisfactory and for some pupils better than this. All groups of pupils, including those in the care of the local authority, are progressing at similar rates.

Older pupils are achieving well in the increasing number of external examinations they can take. These include the ASDAN award (a nationally recognised life skills programme) and last year all Year 11 pupils passed this at Bronze level.

The school set whole-school achievement targets last year and many pupils achieved and exceeded these. The school has recognised, therefore, that these were not sufficiently challenging and those set for the next year are far more so.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress in their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They show good attitudes to school and are keen to work in lessons. Pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their good attendance records, even allowing for a few families who take their children on extended holidays. Pupils feel safe in school and report that if bullying occurs, staff quickly resolve the issues. Behaviour in class and around the school is good and pupils show respect and tolerance towards each other. This is seen at lunchtime where they enjoy chatting together in a relaxed and friendly manner.

Pupils understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, as shown by their comments in the School Council about changes that they have asked for within the tuck shop. 'Look, I've got salad and I've started to go to the gym,' said one young man enthusiastically, following support and guidance he is receiving to lose weight. Pupils through the School Council make important contributions to the development of the school and are keen to show how much they appreciate the fact that staff listen to their ideas. Good attitudes to literacy and number work, coupled with work experience placements and college links, play an important role in helping pupils to develop a good understanding of their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and the school has good evidence to show it is improving. Following detailed monitoring of teaching and learning by the new senior management team, good practice and weaker elements have been identified and inspectors' sampling confirms the accuracy of the judgements.

Most teachers are beginning to make good use of the information they have on pupils' ability levels, although this is not always the case. In these less effective lessons, work is not always set at appropriate levels to match the different needs of pupils, and this can result in pupils of lower ability being confused as to what they are being asked to do. Another key inconsistency in the quality of teaching in the school is the pace of lessons. For example, where good practice exists, such as in an outstanding Year 11 mathematic lesson observed, pupils are constantly challenged by the good use of questioning and respond enthusiastically. In other lessons, however, the pace of learning is much slower when pupils are not stretched by the questioning or the tasks set. Teaching assistants support their teaching colleagues well and typically the planning of lessons includes how they will work with specific groups or individuals. A particular good feature is the way in which they record pupils' responses to questions and use this information in awarding points and rewards to pupils for their efforts during the week.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum which has improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection. There are good and appropriate differences in the way the primary and the secondary curriculum is managed, and good transition arrangements help pupils move from primary to secondary. This level of progression is further developed in the secondary department by the very well-planned programme for pupils in Years 10 and 11, which is having a very positive impact on their personal development. This includes pupils taking on responsibility for their learning through making choices in relation to the options that they follow on college placements. Opportunities for older pupils to take external examinations are satisfactory and are in the process of being increased.

Work-related learning is effective and valued by pupils, and is well supported by good links with external service providers. For instance, a pupil who has just started work experience at his local garage described how he had been very carefully prepared and how through his participation he hoped to fulfil his ambition to become an engineer in the army. Work-related learning is further supported by the many business and enterprise projects organised in the school.

The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of additional activities which add interest and variety to the experiences offered to pupils. They include many visits and visitors

to school, such as a dance teacher who is currently working with a group of pupils to prepare a future production. This, from the comments made by pupils, is being eagerly anticipated by them and is a good example of how the curriculum is having a positive impact on building up pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care, guidance and support which is particularly effective in enhancing pupils' personal development. Pupils' pastoral support is given an important focus and strategies such as the 'Setting targets and reviewing' (STAR) system help pupils to reflect on their personal development as they work towards individual targets. Academic guidance has not previously been as effective but the process of setting targets within pupils' individual education plans has been the subject of recent developments and teachers are beginning to make good use of these. Good links with other services, such as speech therapy, also provide pupils with effective support.

Pupils know through the way that the school is organised that they are working in a safe and valued environment. Arrangements for first aid, health and safety and child protection are all secure, with all staff having completed suitable training. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning and this has resulted in improved responses from parents to the work of the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's very effective leadership is ensuring that the school is improving the quality of education it provides. She has maintained and further developed the good aspects of the school's work she inherited but worked hard with her senior colleagues to bring about improvements to those areas which were less effective. The management of the changes needed has been achieved well and staff have responded positively and work well as a team. Other senior staff have enthusiastically embraced increased responsibilities and have made a good start to developing their management skills.

Considerable emphasis has been placed on evaluating the work of the school and this has brought about considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Much more emphasis is now placed on pupils' achievement and the recording and analysis of it, linked in turn to assessing the quality of teaching and effectively disseminating good practice throughout the school. The accommodation is being improved and this is having a positive impact on the quality of education. For example, the recently refurbished science laboratory and the library are much more suitable for purpose and are fully appreciated by the pupils.

Governors are playing a key role in the development of the school and through their committee structure have a strong and realistic understanding of the school's effectiveness. Together with the senior staff, they have ensured that the school has

improved considerably over the last year, despite the doubts that exist about its long-term future. The school is now providing satisfactory value for money and has a clear capacity to improve even further.



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## 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>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

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

<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**

Thank you so much for being helpful when Mr Emly and I visited recently. We very much enjoyed meeting you and chatting about your school. We know you are very proud of your school and enjoy attending. We know there are number of good things in your school and these include:

the high quality of care and support all the staff offer you

the good curriculum with the many extra activities, visits and visitors that help you to learn

the excellent work of your new headteacher, who is ensuring that your school is improving

you too do your bit through your very good behaviour and working hard in lessons.

To make your school even better, we think there are a few more that should be done. These are:

staff should do more to know how well you are all doing in each subject and always use what they know to help plan lessons

ensure that all your teachers are able to work to the same high standards

ensure that your staff know and can help all of you, no matter what your special needs are.

We know your school is continuing to improve and we hope that you continue to enjoy your time there.

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett Lead inspector