



# Richmond Hill School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109743  
**LEA** LUTON LEA  
**Inspection number** 278256  
**Inspection dates** 11 January 2006 to 12 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms. Janet Thompson LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Sunridge Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community special		LU2 7JL
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01582721019
<b>Number on roll</b>	65	<b>Fax number</b>	01582453093
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Richard Gates
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Jill Miller

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 11 January 2006 - 12 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278256
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools.

## Description of the school

Richmond Hill School is located in Luton. It caters for primary aged children with severe and complex learning difficulties. Pupils come from a mixture of backgrounds and over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. There are currently 65 pupils on roll, 40% of whom do not have English as their first language. More than a third of the pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. Most of these pupils are included within the main body of the school, although some are taught in a specialist base. At the time of the last inspection the school was in the initial stages of changing its designation. There were only a few primary aged pupils, with severe and complex difficulties; the vast majority were secondary aged pupils with moderate learning difficulties and disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory with good features and some pockets of exemplary practice. The needs of the pupils in the school have changed significantly since the previous inspection and the staff, very ably led by the committed headteacher, have made the necessary adjustments. This work has ensured that the curriculum and teaching are relevant to the specific needs of the pupils. The support and care given to the pupils is good and there is some exemplary practice in helping them to manage their own behaviour. The provision, including teaching, is good although this has not yet had sufficient impact on the academic achievement of pupils or their personal development. Pupils are beginning to make more rapid progress although some are still not being sufficiently challenged in some lessons. The leadership team have a more positive picture of the pupils' achievement and personal development than was found during the inspection but progress is increasing rapidly. The leadership team does have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision at the school and have accurately identified areas for development. This, along with improvements in teaching and learning, demonstrates a very clear capacity to improve. The school has been working hard to improve communication support for pupils but this is not consistent throughout the school. The staff have a very good understanding of the progress made by individuals but information is not yet available about the progress made by different groups or how progress improves as a result of different types of support. Pupils are learning to lead healthy lifestyles and make satisfactory progress in their personal development. There are opportunities to act independently but some of the more capable pupils still rely too heavily on adult support. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Develop a consistent approach to communication support throughout lessons and the school day.
- Improve achievement made by all pupils by ensuring that teaching addresses realistic but challenging targets in all subjects for all pupils.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to take on more responsibility as they move through the school.
- Use information about pupils' progress to identify inconsistencies across the school and take action to address these.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Over the last academic year nearly all pupils made satisfactory progress. Over half made good or better progress against the nationally recognised levels of learning ('P levels') or National Curriculum levels in English and science, and a slightly larger majority made good or better progress in mathematics. P level information has been consistently gathered for two years and therefore it is only possible to judge progress over one year. The school has not monitored achievement in a way which evaluates the achievement of different groups of learners or the impact of different support on

pupil progress. Achievement continues to improve and more pupils are now making good or better progress in lessons. The senior leadership team monitor how well targets are matched to pupils' previous learning and 80% of individual education plan targets were achieved last term. Targets are usually challenging but more analysis of the pace of pupils' progress over time and in different subjects would assist in ensuring all pupils reach their potential. The introduction, in September 2005, of a baseline assessment on entry to the school has enabled the school to ensure that pupils receive relevant and challenging targets in the first half term of attending the school.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well and any challenging behaviour, which occurs due to pupils' learning difficulties, is managed effectively. There are good examples of children learning to recognise and deal with their emotions but this is not consistent throughout the school. Some pupils exhibiting difficult behaviour have made exceptional progress and their willingness to participate in school activities is often transformed as a result of the support they receive. Attendance is in line with that of similar schools. There are many opportunities throughout the day when pupils are given a small measure of responsibility. Younger pupils gain a good foundation for personal development but pupils do not take on increasing responsibility as they move through the school. Pupils have been involved in raising money for charities but have no regular role in contributing to the school community. The pupils gain a good understanding about different cultures through well planned lessons and additional experiences. Pupils learn skills relevant to their future lives, reinforced by visits into the community. Many pupils develop a good understanding of what constitutes socially acceptable behaviour but some pupils rely too heavily on adult support. Achievement is celebrated during assemblies, and the multi-sensory approach provides opportunities for spiritual development. There are fewer opportunities for reflection. Structures are in place to ensure the pupils are able to act safely around the school and other environments, but some pupils are capable of taking on greater responsibility for themselves. Eating healthily is promoted well and healthy options are readily chosen by many of the pupils. Sport and activity are also encouraged and many pupils choose very active pursuits during play times.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Although the majority of teaching is good, there are inconsistencies in expectations of some pupils and the use of communication systems to support pupils in their learning. A good monitoring programme has helped to identify areas where teaching needs to be improved and training has been effective so that all teaching is at least satisfactory and the majority is good or better. The improvements in teaching have

not yet had sufficient impact on achievement over time. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and there is often productive good humour in lessons. In the best lessons, all staff clearly communicate high expectations for behaviour and learning. Good team work helps to motivate pupils to achieve. Staff make good use of resources and active participation is expected from pupils, thus helping to maintain a good pace. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' abilities, which they use in most lessons to provide well targeted work, carefully designed to offer sufficient challenge and reinforce prior learning for each pupil.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of the pupils while at the same time offering a good breadth of experience. It meets external requirements. Recent improvements have ensured better links between topics across the subjects, helping pupils' understanding. The school rightly places an emphasis on practical learning making it relevant and interesting for pupils. It is made even more exciting by a wide range of visits to places outside school, which the pupils greatly enjoy. These are carefully planned to reinforce the curriculum areas and help pupils relate the learning from school-based lessons to real life situations. Additional opportunities, offering after-school sports activities and residential visits, further enhance the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff have a good knowledge about the individual needs of pupils and as a result, care and support for pupils are good. Sensitive behaviour management enables students to focus on learning. For pupils with more difficult behaviours, support plans effectively help them improve their social skills. Pupils feel safe at the school and are confident to try new things with the support of staff. One pupil said 'everything is fun but if you feel angry you can get someone (an adult) to sit and talk to'. Correct procedures are followed for safeguarding pupils but some of the written documentation does not reflect current government guidance. The school establishes good partnerships with parents and carers who are involved in setting targets and review of their child's achievement. Some pupils are involved in reviewing their own achievements but this, and helping pupils to be more involved in decision making requires more development. The school works well with its multi-agency partners; the role of speech and language therapists and the ethnic minority support service have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Risk assessments are thorough and help pupils gain full access to the curriculum.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good and have enabled the school to move quickly on a difficult journey. The needs of the pupils who attend the school have changed

significantly. The development in skills and expertise required by the staff at the school has been well established and although there are still some inconsistencies, the management of this has been good. The recent changes explain why provision is good but has not yet had enough impact on the outcomes for pupils. The headteacher and deputy provide strong and purposeful leadership. In the last two years the headteacher has created an atmosphere in which all at the school feel valued and respected. Although the school's view of overall effectiveness is more generous than that judged by the inspector the areas for development are the same. A cycle of self-evaluation has been established and has increasingly involved staff and governors. Without information over time it has been difficult for the school to demonstrate the impact of some of the developments. Relevant key issues from the last inspection have been addressed and progress has been good. The teacher in charge of assessment has established effective systems for collecting information. Work on assessment correctly identified some differences in the knowledge about pupils' levels of achievement. The staff have worked together and this year's information is more accurate. The school keenly seeks the views of parents and these are acted upon, for example extending the school day. Pupils have been consulted once about their views of the school but there is no regular way of involving them in decision making. Governors are actively involved in self-evaluation. They monitor priority developments and evaluate the improvements gained across the school well. Resources are managed effectively and linked carefully to whole school planning in order to help raise the achievement of pupils.

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	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	3	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	2	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	No
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	No
<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	No
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

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

Dear Pupils Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. I enjoyed seeing your work and meeting many of you. I would especially like to thank those of you who came to tell me about your school. Here are some of the good things that I found. - Teaching at your school is good. - Your lessons are fun and interesting. You told me that you enjoyed going out of school on visits, I think this helps you learn. - Your teachers know you well and with all the other staff they work hard to make your school better. - You behave well and when you find this difficult, staff give you extra help. - I was pleased to see so many of you taking exercise and choosing fruit to eat. I think some things could be better at the school and I would like you to work with your teachers and the staff to help your school improve. - Some of you could have harder work in some lessons. - Some of you could make better progress if you had more help with communication. - I would like you to do more on your own without adult help and I have asked the school to give you more responsibility. - I have asked your headteacher to keep looking at what you are all learning and to make sure that you are all getting the right help to learn as much as you can.