



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 115450
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279596
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Charlie Henry LI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Type of school | Special | School address | Lambourne Road |
| School category | Community special | | IG7 6NN |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 02085026442 |
| Number on roll | 31 | Fax number | 02085026729 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr. Nick Kaye |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 November 2000 | Headteacher | Mr. David Wood |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

Description of the school

Wells Park is a residential special school for pupils aged 5 - 11 years who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is located in Chigwell, Essex. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. They have a wide range of abilities. Some pupils have not attended full-time school education for lengthy periods of time before enrolment. At the time of inspection there were 31 pupils on roll. Enrolment takes place throughout the school year and the number of pupils usually rises towards its capacity of 40 later in the year. Almost all pupils are aged 7 - 11 and are boys. Pupils are from across Essex and a few are from nearby London boroughs. Most pupils are of white British ethnic heritage. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language. In addition to being a school, Wells Park is also currently a teacher training centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection agrees with the school's own self-evaluation that Wells Park is a good school. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, many from low starting points arising from the difficulties experienced earlier in their education. Staff assess the needs of their pupils well. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. New teachers are gaining the skills to teach even more effectively. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and feel safe and secure. Pupils understand the progress they are making to achieve their own targets, although they could be involved more in deciding what their targets should be. Attitudes and behaviour improve over time and this helps learning improve well. The quality of care, support and guidance is outstanding, as is the residential provision. The school is highly valued by parents and builds strong relationships with them to further help its pupils. Leadership and management are outstanding. The director provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by other senior staff. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Improvement planning is focused exceptionally clearly on improving pupils' learning. It has successfully addressed the issues identified within the last inspection report. There is an exemplary programme of staff development and support. The governors contribute very well to the school's effectiveness. The school shows excellent capacity for further improvement and it provides good value for money. Effectiveness and efficiency of residential provision The residential provision makes an excellent contribution to pupils' welfare and to their education. There is excellent communication with parents. There is also outstanding liaison between care staff and school staff, including jointly setting and reviewing pupils' targets and implementing their personal development programmes. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including swimming and other sports, ten-pin bowling, craft work and group games. The school has successfully addressed a minor issue raised at the last inspection concerning providing opportunities for home-learning work. The lounge and kitchen/dining areas are of very high quality and contribute to making pupils happy and enjoying their time at school. Mealtimes are important occasions and allow further development of personal and social skills. The residential provision within the school was last inspected by the Commission for Care Standards Inspections (CSCI) in March 2005 [http://www.csci.gov.uk\(http://62.73.173.233/CSCI/RSS/21/S0000018021.V166740.R01.S.pdf\)](http://www.csci.gov.uk(http://62.73.173.233/CSCI/RSS/21/S0000018021.V166740.R01.S.pdf)). Its report judged that almost all of the minimum standards were being met, with some areas at commendable levels. The school has addressed the very few remaining issues within this report.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best. - Involve pupils further in establishing their own targets for learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

As pupils enter the school their attainments are usually within the broadly average range, although for most these levels are lower than would be expected for their capabilities. This is due to the difficulties that they have experienced with learning in their earlier education. However, due to the quality of the education they receive, all pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. There are no significant differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils within the school. Pupils make good gains in their reading, spelling and handwriting skills. They make particularly good progress in their speaking and listening skills, which contribute well to the effectiveness of their personal development. Pupils also make good progress and achieve well in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and the other subjects of the curriculum. The progress that they make prepares them effectively for their future education. Good progress is made toward the challenging personal targets set within individual learning plans and individual social plans in both the school and residential aspects of their placement at Wells Park.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good, although the school's self-evaluation considered that these outcomes for pupils were better than this. Pupils make particularly good progress in their moral and social development. They increase their understanding of their own feelings, how to manage these better and to discuss them with others. As a consequence their behaviour and self-esteem improve well. There are notable examples of improvement in situations previously found to be difficult, for example, with handwriting and when undertaking a craft activity that is taking longer than anticipated. Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils want to learn. This represents significant progress, given their previous difficulties before attending Wells Park. They enjoy their lessons and have a good understanding of what they are learning. They know their personal targets and how well they are achieving them. Pupils learn important skills that will help them well in the future, including their relationships and, especially, listening to others' points of view. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is good compared with similar schools. Punctuality to lessons is excellent. Pupils have a good regard for developing healthy lifestyles, with all taking part in at least two hours per week of physical activities, as well as many choosing to take part in additional activities in their own time in the evenings, and through choosing healthy foods. They feel safe and have no worries about bullying. Pupils are clear about who they would speak with if they have any concerns or worries and are confident that these would be addressed. Pupils contribute effectively to the development of the school through their responses to internal surveys and through the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. This judgement confirms the school's own evaluation. All lessons observed were at least of a satisfactory level, and some were of good quality. As a result of effective training, new staff are gaining the skills necessary to teach children who have difficulties with their behaviour and learning. In the most successful lessons, high expectations for standards of behaviour and work are set and maintained. Teachers know their pupils well and plan a range of interesting activities, catering for the wide range of abilities within the class. Teachers and assistants work well together and this ensures there is successful management of pupils' behaviour and learning improves. All staff implement the underlying approach of the school towards developing pupils' communication skills and self-understanding as a means of improving their feelings of well-being and achievement. The school's token-based reward system is used effectively to help pupils understand when they are working well and what they need to do to improve. The new interactive white boards are used effectively, although at times other resources would be more appropriate. Occasionally the pace of lessons is too fast and moves on without checking how well pupils are learning. The careful and detailed approach to assessment begins as soon as pupils enter the school. This establishes what pupils can do, building on the information that has already been provided about their prior attainment, and sets targets for their learning, including their behaviour, in the residential setting. While pupils are aware of these targets, they are not involved as well as they could be in discussing what they should be. Progress towards achieving these targets is regularly monitored and recorded.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The inspection agrees with the school that the curriculum is good. An individualised curriculum is achieved through the combination of a broad and balanced range of subjects together with programmes for personal development. There is appropriately high emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills as these are at low levels for many pupils when they enter the school and are important for their progression to other schools. One particularly successful focus for the curriculum is on extending pupils' speaking and listening skills so that they can have the confidence and ability to express themselves. Much of the work in other subjects is around topics that interest and motivate, for example, studying history through looking at toys. There is a good range of visits outside of school, for example, in the local area when looking at different houses and in visiting the Golden Hind exhibition. There is also a good range of activities available after school as part of the residential provision. The programme of physical activities and healthy eating contributes well to helping pupils take care of their health and for their safety.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has underestimated the quality of its care, support and guidance for its pupils as these are outstanding, rather than good. Since staff know pupils so well they are able to provide immediate support at times of difficulty. Residential and class-based staff are very well supported in these aspects by senior staff who routinely assist in lessons. The system for improving behaviour is excellent. It combines the motivational aspects of praise and rewards together with a longer-lasting improvement in pupils' understanding about how they feel, including if they are feeling anxious or unhappy, and how to respond to these in appropriate ways. The exemplary joint work between school and care staff contributes to this quality. Frequent communication between these two groups of staff, including care staff spending time supporting in class and school staff spending time with the pupils in the evenings, ensures that there is a very high level of consistency in pupils' care. Regular phone calls and written communication with parents build very good relationships and ensures they are well informed about how well their children are learning. Parents are very complimentary about their children's education, and attendance at school events is high. These events often include training, for example, 'How to entertain your child for under a pound'. Procedures for safeguarding children are good. Detailed assessment of each pupil's needs includes consideration of any risks and actions to be taken to ensure their safety. There is very effective liaison with medical and other specialists to ensure the needs of pupils are represented and catered for. There are also very well planned preparations for pupils for their next stage of education, whether to a mainstream school or another special school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The director provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by other members of the senior management team. High standards are set for pupils' learning and their personal development based on a very clear view of the school's role in helping its pupils' development. This vision of the school is understood and shared by staff. Self-evaluation is rigorous and generally accurate. It involves all staff, as well as the views of parents and pupils. School improvement plans are well founded on this evaluation and are focused very clearly on improving pupils' learning. Parents hold the school in very high regard. Only positive comments were received when views were sought as part of the inspection. This is in line with the outcomes of the school's own surveys. Implementation of the plans is very effectively monitored. There has been effective action to address issues raised at the time of the last inspection. There is an exemplary emphasis on staff development, from detailed induction training, ongoing further professional development, and support and appraisal. Regular and rigorous observation of teaching and learning identifies any areas for further training that are then agreed with staff. Training is provided and evaluation of its effectiveness is made as part of subsequent monitoring. Equality of opportunity is promoted well through

the detailed knowledge that is held about each pupil and the rigorous review and planning procedures. Analysis of attainment tests is undertaken and this contributes well to ensuring that each pupil's needs are met and to whole-school planning. Procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are robust. Issues raised within the latest care standards report regarding ensuring the completion of checks about new staff prior to taking up post have been addressed. The school makes very effective use of its resources. There is a good number of staff, including teachers, teaching assistants and care staff, and other school support staff, to meet pupils' needs. Accommodation is excellent. Teaching rooms are spacious and bright and the dining room, in particular, contributes to pupils' feelings of being respected and valued. The school shows excellent capacity for further improvement and provides good value for money. The contribution to the school by governors is excellent. They regularly visit the school to obtain first hand information about how effective it is. Many governors have specific responsibilities for aspects of the school. They also receive detailed information, including about pupils' progress and the implementation of the school's improvement plan.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | 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

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 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

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

¹ 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

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 1 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 | 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 | 1 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| 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 |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| 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 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| 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 |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| 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 | 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

As you know I recently visited your school to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for looking after me and making me feel so welcome, I really enjoyed it and learned a lot about your school. Thank you for telling me about the things you do and how you think your teachers and other staff are helping you to learn. I'd like to say a special thank you to members of the school council I spoke with and to the children I had tea with on Wednesday evening. What I liked about your school - The way you all enjoy school and want to learn. - The progress you make, especially in your behaviour. - How well your teachers know what you need to learn. - The care that all staff take of you. - All staff work so well together to help you. - The residential parts of your time at school. - The director and senior staff make sure the school is working well. What I have asked your school to do now - To involve you more in deciding what your targets should be. - To make sure that all of the teaching is really good.