



Heathfield Special School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116607
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 279855
Inspection dates 14 December 2005 to 15 December 2005
Reporting inspector Jacque Cook AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Oldbury Way
School category	Community special		Fareham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		PO14 3BN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01329845150
Number on roll	121	Fax number	01329846548
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs M Hunt
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs E Muirhead

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 14 December 2005 - 15 December 2005	Inspection number 279855
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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 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 one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Heathfield is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Thirty-five pupils also have autistic spectrum disorder and ten have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Five pupils have physical disabilities and a few have sensory impairments or severe learning difficulties. There are about twice as many boys as girls and very few are from ethnic minority groups. Two pupils speak English as an additional language and there are three looked after children. There is an outreach service to local mainstream schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Heathfield is a good school. The inspector disagrees with the school's view in their self evaluation that they are outstanding, which was made on the basis of the previous inspection findings and progress since the last inspection, and did not take sufficient account of the current good level of achievement of the pupils. The school gives good value for money. Although the quality of teaching and learning has improved and is good, it is not consistently high throughout the school. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good and children get a good start to their education. Among the strengths of the school are the personal development of the pupils and their care, welfare and guidance, which are outstanding. The curriculum is outstanding and is enriched very well through a range of excellent additional activities. The overall good leadership and management, and very good leadership of the headteacher, have enabled staff to develop innovations successfully. All issues from the previous inspection have been very well addressed and the school has an excellent capacity to improve further. As a result of a recent focus for improvement, pupils have become more independent and self confident. The school is already working on improving the quality of pupils' reading which is identified as the next area for development. Most areas of the work of the school are very well evaluated, but there are a few gaps that need to be checked such as attendance and home/school books.

What the school should do to improve further

* Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is all of a consistently high standard.* Continue work started to improve the quality of pupils' reading throughout the school.* Ensure all aspects of the school's work are appropriately monitored.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The progress and achievement of pupils are good. They do exceptionally well in personal, social and health education because aspects of this work have been a focus through improving pupils' learning. This has also contributed to pupils' outstanding progress in improving their listening skills. The school has rightly identified reading as an area for development and their next focus for improvement. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all the areas of learning. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder make good progress. By the time they leave the school, they have made significant gains in improving their communication skills. This is largely due to the very good structures and routines that are established and the use of specific teaching methods such as Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH). Pupils make good progress from their starting points, and whilst standards are below average, the pupils have suitably challenging targets which they are meeting well. There is no measurable difference between the progress of girls and boys. The close monitoring of the progress made

by each pupil ensures that the very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and those that are in the care of the local authority make the same rates of progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils personal development and well being are excellent. Pupils' clearly enjoy their work, particularly when they are rewarded for doing well. Pupils' behaviour is good. Those with behaviour difficulties are making good progress towards learning to conform to the school's expectations. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, making positive contributions to the school community. Members of the school council take their roles very seriously, collecting opinions from their classmates and sharing them at meetings. They are keen to purchase 'friendship benches' for the playgrounds so that andquot;children can always have someone to talk to even when they are sadandquot;. Pupils also contribute to the wider community through fundraising for charities and they are very aware of the importance of recycling waste. The very high quality of the personal, social and health education helps pupils to develop a clear understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely good. Pupils have many opportunities to celebrate a broad range of cultures in their work and in activities such as the Christmas production. Most pupils attend school regularly and attendance overall is good. Although absence rates have gone up since the last inspection, this is largely due to hospitalisation and sickness. However, procedures for checking reasons for absence are not sufficiently rigorous.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but varies throughout the school. Comprehensive monitoring of teaching and learning has led to an improvement and there are examples of outstanding teaching and learning. In these lessons, staff ensure the work is interesting and exciting. Questioning is used extremely well to ensure that all pupils participate. This ensures that pupils work at the highest levels they can and clearly enjoy their work. There are very high levels of expertise in helping pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Clear routines and consistent use of specific strategies ensure these pupils have appropriate structures and routines to learn effectively. A notable strength of the teaching and learning is the team work of the staff. They know the needs of the pupils very well and build strong relationships with them. Pupils want to work hard and because work is well matched to their needs their concentration increases. Teaching assistants have high levels of expertise and many have specific responsibilities within school. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, this is because the pace of the lesson is too slow and pupils begin to get restless. Occasionally there are inconsistencies in dealing with difficult behaviour or a lack of clarity about

what is expected. Staff assess pupils' progress well and use the information to plan their lessons. Parents are involved well in their children's learning through sharing reading books and the 'learning together' initiative.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The excellent basis for staff planning known as the Heathfield Learning Steps ensures that the curriculum is well matched to the needs of the pupils. Interesting innovations ensure the curriculum is enriched and broadened successfully. Massage sessions, for example, help pupils to feel relaxed as well as to learn how to support and help others. Opportunities are developed to work with pupils from a mainstream school through art, music and dance workshops. Pupils created and modelled large 'litterbugs' together. The views of pupils are taken into account, for example their suggestions led to a cinema topic based on 'Toy Story'. There are many visits that extend pupils' understanding of the wider community and develop their economic awareness through effectively developing their self-confidence. Older pupils have a residential experience which helps them to become more independent. Lunch-time activities are developing very well. The introduction of 'Huff and Puff' is described as "good fun" by the pupils, one of whom added "and it is healthy!"

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of the pupils are excellent. Staff take great care to provide a safe environment where pupils can learn effectively. There are very good arrangements to ensure that pupils have an adult they can turn to if there are any problems. Additionally, there is the 'listening ear', where a pupil can go and talk in confidence to an experienced member of staff. These arrangements are particularly helpful for pupils in the care of the local authority and those who are identified as vulnerable. Arrangements for helping pupils to improve their behaviour are very good. Incidents are closely monitored and strategies devised to successfully reduce incidents. The school works very well with parents. There are regular meetings and many telephone conversations. The 'Learning Together' groups for the younger pupils and their families are an excellent innovation. Parents work with their child on activities they will do in school and have opportunities to talk with professionals in a friendly and informal way. Home-school books are used well in many classes to exchange information with parents. They are of particular importance for those pupils with communication difficulties. However, there are a few instances where they are not consistently completed by staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. There is a clear direction to the work of the school which is strengthened by the very high quality of the leadership provided by the headteacher. The staff have a common sense of purpose in raising the achievement of the pupils. Careful analysis of data ensures that priorities for improvement are accurately selected. Last year there was a successful focus on improving writing. This year, reading is to be developed. The monitoring of teaching and learning has successfully improved the work of all teachers and the recently developed 'peer monitoring' where teachers observe a colleague's lessons is also proving effective. This has focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in subjects that include art and design, history and music. There are a few areas of the school's work that require closer checking, for example, the completion of home-school books and the attendance data. The new school improvement plan is being put together well using a series of focused task groups lead by a range of staff. The views of parents, pupils, staff and governors have all been included extremely well in the evaluation of the work of the school that has contributed to the new plan. The outreach service is funded by the school and is very well regarded by the local mainstream schools it supports. There is a real strength in the way improvements have been made since the last inspection. All the issues have been dealt with. To improve the quality of the environment in the Foundation Stage classroom, the school successfully raised a very large sum of money to make significant changes. The area is now transformed into a very good learning area for children. Innovations such as the teachers' enquiry project have developed skills very well and led to pupils improving their learning. This shows that the school has a very good capacity to improve further. The governing body provides excellent support and monitors the work of the school very well. Governors question and discuss providing an appropriate level of challenge to the school.

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.

Inspection judgements

<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

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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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	4	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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

Thank you very much for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed seeing you working. I would like to give a big thank you to the members of the school council who told me about your school, which was very helpful.

This is what I liked about your school: * You work hard and are doing well. * You are doing extremely well in personal, social and health education and becoming more able to do things on your own. * Your teachers and support staff help you to learn well. * Teachers plan interesting and enjoyable things for you to learn. * You are looked after extremely well at school. * Your headteacher runs the school very well.

This is what I have asked your school to do now: * Continue to improve the teaching so that it is all very good. * Continue to help you to be better at reading. * Make sure all parts of the school's work are checked. Best wishes for the future