



Hall School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121257
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280964
Inspection dates 26 April 2006 to 27 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Ian Naylor LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	St Faith's Road
School category	Community special		NR6 7AD
Age range of pupils	3 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01603 466467
Number on roll	75	Fax number	01603 466407
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Jean Wayman
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Jan Wiggins

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hall School is a special school for pupils with complex and significant learning difficulties and serves wide urban and rural areas of central Norfolk. Pupils are predominantly from a White British heritage. All pupils' attainments are significantly lower than average and all have a Statement of Special Educational Need. About a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Nursery and reception children spend two days per week in mainstream schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's view is that overall effectiveness is satisfactory and inspectors agree. Hall School is a lively and welcoming school in which all staff are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe, happy and well cared for. The appointment of a new headteacher four terms ago has had a positive impact upon the leadership and the direction of the school. Her energy and enthusiasm have ensured that the issues from the last inspection have been properly addressed. The school has therefore seen a significant increase in the numbers of staff, significant improvements to the spaces for teaching and general improvements to the overall accommodation and furnishings. This has created a better working environment for pupils and staff alike. Achievement is satisfactory overall, with much that is good, especially as pupils move into the senior parts of the school, including the Sixth Form. There is good progress made in pupils' speaking and listening, and in their social skills across the school. Teaching is satisfactory. Many lessons are good and some are outstanding because they provide exciting activities and opportunities to promote pupils' learning. However, assessment information and data about pupils' achievements and progress is not yet used accurately to help with lesson planning. Teaching assistants provide very good levels of personal care for pupils, but are insufficiently involved in promoting learning. The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features, such as the work-related learning programme for pupils in the Sixth Form. The planning for the curriculum is currently being further modified so that teachers can provide the best opportunities to pupils for learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used satisfactorily to support the subjects, an improvement since the last inspection, and this area is currently in receipt of a significant increase to its resources. Staff provide good levels of pupil welfare and support and the provision of care is good overall. Leadership is satisfactory. The headteacher, with the support of governors, has advanced plans to reorganise the senior leadership team so that it is more effective in monitoring teaching quality and promoting learning and achievement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership in monitoring in order to raise levels of pupils' achievement.
- Develop the role of teaching assistants so that they take a more active part in lessons and support teaching and learning effectively.
- Use assessment information and data about pupils' achievements and progress more accurately to help with lesson planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement is satisfactory and this matches the evaluation made by the school. Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment. In the Foundation Stage, achievement is satisfactory with good progress made in skills of communication. There is satisfactory achievement and sustained progress in Years 1 to 8. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 and those in the Sixth Form make good progress in their achievements. There are many examples of pupils making good progress in their basic skills. Over two-thirds of pupils met at least half of their individual education plan targets in 2005. Pupils are successful in meeting their annual review targets. Achievement across the school is good in speaking and listening skills. Better progress has been made in reading skills since the last inspection, so that reading is now satisfactory. The weakest area of achievement now lies in pupils' writing skills. Good progress is made by pupils in their social and life skills which actively promotes their success in personal development. This is exemplified well by the way in which a growing number of pupils make good progress in their part-time placements in mainstream schools. Students successfully undertake work experience, and show good achievements in the work related curriculum. Students in Years 10 to 11 and in the Sixth Form achieve national accreditation in life skills through the 'ASDAN Transition Challenge' course and the 'Equals Moving-On' courses. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The progress of pupils with autism, those with complex learning difficulties and that of looked after children, is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good and this agrees with the school's own evaluation. Pupils are happy and enjoy being at school very much. The school pays close attention towards encouraging pupils to become self-reliant and equipped as far as possible to manage their lives independently. Through physical exercise and making healthy eating choices pupils make good progress in developing a healthy lifestyle. Behaviour is mostly good and there is an orderly and happy atmosphere in lessons and whilst pupils move around the school. During lessons some challenging behaviour occurs but this is very well managed by staff to minimise disruption to other pupils. Most pupils have a good record of attendance. They are interested and cooperative during lessons and with the encouragement of staff, they are keen to take part in all the activities provided for them. Pupils develop a good sense of community awareness and older pupils in particular, are actively involved in making a contribution to the life of the school. They value their role on the school council and are gaining confidence in sharing their views and ideas for improvements. Pupils report that they feel safe and secure in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well and they have regular opportunities to take part in school drama productions and visits to places of educational interest. Personal, social and health education is making an increasingly strong contribution to pupils' social and moral

understanding of the wider world. The future economic well-being of older pupils is well developed through the curriculum, work-related learning and work experience.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching is satisfactory. The most consistently good teaching is found in lessons for 11-16 year olds and the Sixth Form. However, there are good lessons at times in all areas of the school, and some that are outstanding. The features of the best teaching are the teachers good subject knowledge, understanding of pupils' needs and abilities and the way in which teachers and teaching assistants work as a team. Staff manage the behaviour of pupils very well, especially those with challenging behaviours. There are very good relationships with pupils. Most lessons are satisfactorily planned to meet the wide range of pupils' individual learning needs through the carefully thought out activities and careful use of resources. Many lessons do not make sufficient use of the information from assessments, so that there is an even closer match to precisely what each pupil needs to learn next. Use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning as well as their welfare needs is not yet consistently happening. Some teaching assistants are better deployed by teachers in this respect than others. Insufficient time is given to precise planning for activities such as recording, small group and individual work. Teaching assistants have to increase their skills in such areas as sensory support and the use of electronic aids. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to reflect on what they have learnt and how they might improve. Better use is now made by teachers of ICT to support pupils' learning than reported previously.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. The school has recently evaluated its curriculum provision and is currently developing a more consistent approach for assessing and recording progress and pupils' individual needs. This includes the introduction of a whole school curriculum map and subject plans, in order to better meet the needs of pupils with complex learning difficulties. The school works hard to develop pupils' communication skills and this is an important part of its work, for example, through drama. The school now has an approach to reading that is used consistently by all staff. Pupils are well supported by their involvement in the 'Catch Up' programme, and this is having an impact on the progress they make in developing their reading skills. The personal, social and health education and citizenship programmes contribute well to extending pupils' independence and the development of work-related learning. Older pupils are well supported to access a range of college courses and work experience placements relevant to their needs, interests and future livelihood. Throughout the

school, pupils have the opportunity to enjoy a range of enriching activities and community visits which are beneficial in improving their social and life skills. Older pupils take part in a range of sports activities and students in Years 14 to 19 have a well-planned programme in which they work with pupils from other special schools, resulting in presentations and performances. Pupils benefit from the school's links with a local high school which offers them the opportunity to participate successfully alongside their peers in the Young Enterprise Team Building Project.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are safeguarded very well and the general level of pastoral support and welfare is of a good standard. There is a safe and supportive environment in which pupils can learn. Good attention is given to ensuring that pupils stay healthy. There are clear procedures for child protection, risk assessments and for emergency aid, with regular training for staff. Close liaison and working relationships are made with a range of other professionals and agencies who regularly visit or hold clinics at the school, including those from health, children's services and Connexions (careers service). There is a particularly strong and beneficial partnership with the local children's disability team. Parents and carers are involved fully in the reviews of their child's progress. They have a very high opinion of the level of care provided by the school. Staff are skilful at writing individual education, care, support or behaviour plans. The school ensures that parents have appropriate information about respite support. The site manager is a health and safety coordinator and carries out careful annual risk assessments of the building and facilities, thus minimising the risk to pupils, staff and visitors.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher provides good leadership and in the relatively short time since her appointment has shown vision, and given clear direction. She has made difficult but necessary decisions involving changes to deployment of staff and in determining areas of responsibility. Other developments are having a positive impact upon pupils' personal development, care, health and safety. These are shown, for example, in the many improvements to the building and furnishings of the school. The headteacher has put into action school plans with the support of staff and governors, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of senior management in supporting pupils' learning and achievement. These plans have not yet been fully implemented, but show a clear intent to have a strong leadership team that can promote achievement through monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning. These plans underpin the school's good capacity to further improve. The school's use of self-evaluation is good. Financial administration and procedures have been revised and improved. Governors' committees have been reorganised so that more emphasis can be given to supporting staff in providing effective provision and in evaluating its effectiveness. The new headteacher

has ensured that the issues from the last inspection have now been addressed. Parents and carers are regularly consulted, involved and kept informed about key developments in school.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

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

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?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
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

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	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

Dear Children and Students You may remember that my inspector friend and I visited your school recently. Thank you for making us feel very welcome. You were very friendly and helpful in the way you allowed us to visit your lessons and to look at your work. I would like to tell you what we found out about your school. This is a happy school and you all work hard to improve in your learning. You are very friendly to one another and to visitors. We think you behave well and enjoy coming to school. Staff provide interesting activities in lessons which you enjoy and which help you to learn. You like the headteacher and feel that she does a good job. Many of you told us that staff are very caring. You do lots of exercise, eat healthy food and know about keeping yourselves safe. We especially liked the way you help one another. You work hard and are learning to be more confident in doing things for yourselves. Older students do very well when they go to the college and work experience placements. Teachers and teaching assistants need to make sure that each of you have things you can do in lessons which are not too hard and not too easy; to help you to make more progress and achieve more success in all that you do. They need to make regular checks on how well you are doing in lessons. They could use this information to help them to plan even more exciting and interesting things for you to do to help you to learn new things. With best wishes for the future.