



Walton Leigh School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125468
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 281940
Inspection dates 19 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Jacque Cook AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Queen's Road
School category	Community special		Hersham
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		Walton-on-Thames KT12 5AB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01932 223243
Number on roll	62	Fax number	01932 254320
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Gill Golding
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Linda Curtis

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Walton Leigh is a school for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Twelve pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties and nine have additional autistic spectrum disorders. Approximately half the pupils are aged over 16. There is a small percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and ten speak English as an additional language. Five are looked after children. Most pupils join the school from five primary schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school's effectiveness is outstanding, in keeping with its own view. Value for money is excellent. Pupils make excellent progress, notably in improving their communication skills and their personal development is outstanding. They learn extremely well because the quality of teaching is very high and the curriculum is excellent. Teachers plan interesting lessons that have activities suitable for all the pupils in their class. Staff training is given a high priority and has led to high levels of expertise.

The outstanding qualities of the headteacher, who is strongly supported by the senior management team and the governing body, have ensured that the school continues to work on raising standards. The school is very thorough in its self evaluation and the school's capacity to improve further is excellent. Improvements to the targets in individual education plans have led to increasing numbers of pupils who are successful in achieving them. However, the school is aware that more work needs to be done on developing individual education plans to ensure that all targets are achievable.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The excellent effectiveness and efficiency of the post-16 provision reflects the very high standard of its leadership and management. This has ensured that students have an interesting and varied curriculum which is very suitable and prepares them extremely well for when they leave school. Students make excellent progress and achieve qualifications by the time they leave. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent and students become more confident and independent. They contribute very well to the school and the wider community and their economic well-being is developed exceptionally well. The students and their parents are very pleased with the quality of education provided. Value for money is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen up the targets in individual education plans so that all targets are within the grasp of the pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils join the school with very low levels of attainment. From this low base many make outstanding progress and achieve extremely well. Excellent gains are made in literacy and particularly in improving communication skills. This is because staff are very effective in using additional means of communication. These include objects of reference such as an inflatable arm band to indicate swimming and signing and symbols to support pupils' learning of language. Interesting and relevant activities ensure that very good progress is made in mathematics. All students are achieving very well in

information and communication technology (ICT). They are learning new skills using the interactive white boards. 'Looked after' children and those from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to their peers.

Year 11 pupils make excellent progress towards the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Transition Challenge. This course is successfully built on in the further education provision where students make outstanding progress towards qualifications such as the ASDAN Towards Independence and Equals Moving On.

Most pupils are making good progress towards meeting targets on their individual education plans. This year, whilst there has been an improvement in the number fully achieving targets, for a significant proportion the targets have proved too challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour and attitudes are excellent and the attendance of most is very good. A few pupils, last year, had extensive hospital stays and time recuperating. This lowered the otherwise very good attendance figures. Parents comment that their children thoroughly enjoy their education. This is because staff often make lessons fun. In an activity practising counting, pupils laugh and cheer, for example, as their friends knock down skittles, so they can record the number on a bar chart. They know about staying safe and many take exercise and adopt a healthy lifestyle stating, 'Eat fruit 'cos it is good for you.'

Pupils contribute to the school community extremely well. The school council is very effective. Members collect views from their classes and make suggestions which are acted on for school events. Pupils recalled enthusiastically, 'We voted for which teachers went in the stocks and threw wet sponges.' Collections for charity are regular occurrences. For example, the school raised enough money for three goats in a recent 'Get Your Goat Day' for Farm Africa. Pupils' workplace skills are developed very well. They learn about different types of jobs and become more confident in meeting people. They successfully take part in residential trips, some abroad, and in challenging activities such as activity holidays.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. They clearly understand right from wrong and many join enthusiastically in prayers and in celebrations.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Overall, teaching and learning are excellent. The extremely high levels of support and excellent professional staff development are a significant factor in ensuring that all staff continue to improve their work. This has been particularly helpful for newly

qualified teachers and those who have trained abroad. They have quickly settled in and increased their levels of expertise where appropriate.

Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and as a result, work is extremely well matched to the needs of the pupils. The consistent use of signing, symbols and objects of reference ensures that pupils understand what is expected of them. A significant strength of teaching and learning is the outstanding relationships that staff build with the pupils. This together with the excellent class routines established helps those with autistic spectrum disorder to learn especially well. Care is taken to extend pupils' verbal skills. In one lesson, for example, pupils take turns each day to be the 'teacher' and ask each of their classmates if they are happy. When they get a response, they then ask, 'Why?' and successfully elicit further information. Very occasionally, there are lessons where activities take a bit too long to keep pupils' full attention, or pace is temporarily lost at changeover from group to whole class activities.

Assessment procedures are very good. Staff, and in some instances, pupils, know the learning targets they are working towards. Lesson objectives are very clear and well evaluated.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum is exceptionally well suited to the needs of the pupils. It is very well designed and planned so that all pupils can make progress in all the subjects they study. On two days each week, pupils of all ages are grouped by ability for their lessons. This is highly successful. Their social skills are developed very well and also because they get used to different staff, this is good preparation for working in the further education provision. Specific strategies to help pupils with autistic spectrum disorder such as the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) and the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) are very effective in helping them to learn effectively.

The curriculum for students in the further education provision is outstanding. Options provided broaden their experiences and the range of provision made in the community is extremely good. This prepares them very well for when they leave school. College courses, extended education classes and work sampling and work experience are of high quality. Additional complementary courses include activities such as sports at Coldingly, aerobics and meal preparation. Skills for Life are developed very well through the allotment project and confidence increased through learning sailing. Students' financial skills are developed very effectively through the various enterprise activities that include making and selling pottery plaques and growing and selling pot plants.

School journeys, such as, visiting Paris and skiing in Italy, broaden pupils' experiences. The curriculum is further enriched through the lunchtime aerobics and healthy eating club, football coaching and the Interact drama group with mainstream pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to work in other schools, if it is appropriate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided are outstanding. Staff give an extremely high priority to the safety of the pupils. Safety arrangements and risk assessments are robust. Pupils are confident that their teachers and support staff help them. Improvements to the school meals service and lunchtime plans for pupils have been highly effective in promoting a healthy lifestyle. The personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons provide excellent support and guidance for pupils. This helps them to do well in school. Induction arrangements for pupils joining the school are excellent. Very good help and guidance is given to students in making decisions about what to do when they leave school. Links with a careers advisory group are excellent.

There are outstanding procedures for identifying which learners are not doing as well as would be expected. The 'traffic light' system ensures they are carefully monitored and their progress evaluated. As a result, many have made significant gains. However, in some instances the targets in individual education plans are over ambitious.

Parents are very positive about the way the school works with them. Communication routes include electronic-mail which enables quick responses. Strategies such as, the power-point presentation by students about their work to their parents at annual reviews are highly successful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The outstanding leadership and the management of the school are firmly based on the excellent and innovative vision and direction of the headteacher and the strong and supportive senior management team. Managers at all levels have a sharp focus on improving the progress made by the pupils. The care and commitment of the staff are excellent. There are very clear and highly effective procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. These are constantly refined so that the overall quality continues to rise. Work with the speech and language therapist has improved the communication targets very well. This has led to more pupils reaching the targets that are suitably challenging. The 'traffic light' system for monitoring pupils' progress has been reviewed several times to make it more effective. Behaviour management strategies using another 'traffic light' system are also refined and used consistently. As a result, pupils know that yellow means 'think'. Views of parents, governors and others who work in the school are taken into account as part of the self evaluation, which contributes to its accuracy. The excellent track record of improvement has ensured that all the issues from the last inspection have been met. The school has an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

The governing body provide excellent support and appropriate challenge to the school. Their expertise is particularly helpful in the preparation for, and monitoring of, the forthcoming building work. The new facilities planned should improve the

accommodation considerably. At present, there is little storage space for the equipment needed by some 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>	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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

Pupils

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited recently. I very much enjoyed looking at your work and seeing you in lessons. I would like to thank all of you who told me about the school, especially the members of the school council. I am impressed by how much you do to make the school such an outstanding place to be in.

This is what I liked about the school.* You make excellent progress.* You work very hard indeed and behave extremely well.* Teaching is excellent.* Staff take very good care of you and you feel safe.* The work you do is interesting and helps you improve.* The headteacher, staff and governors are excellent.

This is what I have asked the school to do now.* Improve the targets on your plans so you can achieve them more often.

With best wishes

Jacque Cook

Lead Inspector