



# Exhall Grange School and Science College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 125794  
**LEA** Warwickshire  
**Inspection number** 281999  
**Inspection dates** 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Patricia Potheary AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Wheelwright Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Coventry
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19		Warwickshire CV7 9HP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	024 76364200
<b>Number on roll</b>	200	<b>Fax number</b>	024 76645055
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Jan Dunne
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 November 2002	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Truman

<b>Age group</b> 2 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 March 2006 - 22 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281999
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Exhall Grange is a community special school and specialist science college. All pupils have significant disabilities or learning difficulties, predominantly physical disability, visual impairment or autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). A growing number of pupils, currently 33, have learning difficulties as their principle need. The Nursery is an assessment unit and also has pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties. Pupils leave the Nursery for other schools, including Exhall Grange. The secondary department accepts pupils when they leave their primary schools and is double the size of the primary department. Many pupils stay on in the sixth form, but several join from other schools. Most pupils and students are from White British backgrounds with just under a quarter from a wide range of other ethnic heritages.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Exhall Grange is an extremely effective school which has maintained a very high level of performance for many years. Senior staff also view the provision as outstanding. The school provides excellent value for money. Each year, pupils of all ages, including those in the Nursery, make exceptional progress. Pupils are taught to a high standard and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. A few teachers find meeting the needs of those with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) more difficult and skilled specialist provision is now in place to support them. Pupils make exceptional personal progress, growing in confidence, maturity and the ability to work with others. Provision in the Nursery is of an exceptionally high standard. The curriculum offers many delights that pupils readily take up, especially in science and sport, where they excel. As a specialist science college, Exhall Grange undertakes significant work with local schools, providing equipment, expertise and engaging activities. Pupils receive very strong support and guidance to help them reach their goals. Leadership and management are outstanding in maintaining and improving provision in all aspects, and demonstrate the capacity to continue improving. The role of middle managers, however, is not yet clear enough to ensure that all systems work consistently to meet the rapidly changing needs of all pupils.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form is effective and provision is good. This matches the view of the leadership team. Students achieve well and make good progress because teaching is good. Where possible, courses are closely matched to students' interests and abilities from an excellent selection. Students are involved very well in the process. For a few students, progress has been slower because the sixth form is adapting to a significant change in student abilities. This means that some courses and some teaching did not fully meet their needs last year, although this is already improved.

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

- Clarify the roles of middle managers to ensure greater consistency of provision, especially for the sixth form, for pupils with ASD and for the increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Pupils aged 2 to 16 demonstrate outstanding progress and achievement because each year they consistently do very much better than could reasonably be expected. This holds true regardless of pupils' abilities or learning difficulties. Pupils' standards when they start school are below average because of their significant difficulties, but all

pupils leave the school with a wide range of GCSEs, Entry Level and other qualifications and usually go on to further success in the sixth form or local colleges. In the sixth form, progress is generally good and pupils achieve a very wide range of qualifications from ASDAN to GNVQs and 'A' levels. Progress in English, mathematics and science is very strong and some pupils show considerable achievement in sport. Pupils all have challenging individual subject and personal targets, which are regularly achieved. This is exceptionally good in the primary department. Only a very small number of pupils do not make expected progress and this is generally in literacy or numeracy or the sixth form for those with more significant learning difficulties. However, the school's own analysis of pupils' results shows that there is no significant difference in performance for any particular group of pupils. In the sixth form, problems with finding suitable courses for the changing nature of students' abilities have meant that some course results fell last year. This is being addressed and courses this year are helping students to achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' and students' personal development and well-being are outstanding because they gain so much from their time spent at Exhall Grange. Parents report how much their children enjoy school, often for the first time. Pupils show an unusual maturity in their relationships with staff and each other and are very positive about wanting to work hard and do well. Behaviour in lessons is excellent. The difficult behaviour of a small minority around the school is well managed and improving. Attendance is good, and has improved each year. Pupils and students develop very good skills to prepare them for a successful future, including strong basic skills, information and communication technology (ICT) skills, group working and work experience. Pupils and students make a significant contribution to the school and wider community. The school council regularly and effectively champions challenging issues. Pupils take very good care of each other, help collect litter or organise charitable events, for example. Many pupils represent the school in regular science, sporting and musical events. Pupils and students play a very active part in keeping healthy. For example, they choose to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and are seeking, through the school council, to improve school lunches. All pupils take part in at least two hours of physical activity each week, as well as many who join lunchtime and after-school sports clubs. They have contributed to the Active Sports Mark Gold status and swimming and physical education (PE) are in their top four favourite subjects. Pupils and students are very knowledgeable about how to keep safe and who to turn to if they need help. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of pupils and students is excellent. For example, they take part enthusiastically in a wide range of cultural activities, which are often oversubscribed. In discussion, they show a highly sensitive respect and understanding for the beliefs and differences of others.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Very high quality teaching leads to excellent progress for almost all pupils. Teaching is particularly strong in the Nursery and primary school. In the secondary school, the majority of teaching is good, although a significant amount is outstanding. Sixth form students are taught well because the school is adapting effectively to a significant change in student abilities and enabling them to achieve well. In all lessons, teachers have an evident command of their subjects, which inspires pupils and students to do well. In all lessons, relationships and therefore behaviour are excellent. Lesson planning to develop pupils' individual targets is also excellent. The encouragement of pupils to work independently and collaboratively is exemplary. Most teachers are highly skilled in meeting the widely differing needs of pupils using specialised strategies, ICT, high quality support and adaptations. In a few lessons, teachers are less skilled in supporting pupils with ASD or those who have difficulties with literacy or numeracy. The use of signing and symbols to support communication is also inconsistent. The work of teaching assistants contributes significantly to pupils' progress, but it is not always well planned for maximum impact. Assessment to support learning is excellent in the primary school and although it is good in the secondary department and sixth form, it is less consistent.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

The quality of the school's curriculum is outstanding for all age groups, including the sixth form this year. The school provides an exceptionally wide range of courses, which meet most pupils' needs very well. The curriculum is also beginning to meet the needs of those with significantly more complex learning difficulties much more effectively. For example, specialist teachers for pupils with ASD are helping teachers meet their needs more effectively. Programmes are planned meticulously to build very effectively on what pupils have learned before. Science and sports are particular strengths. Since becoming a specialist science college, more pupils choose science as an option. Within the curriculum, there are many opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping safe, how to avoid drugs, eat healthily and why they should keep fit. The school prepares pupils very well for their future work through careers education, work experience, enterprise projects and links in many subjects. The provision for vocational education courses is good, and improving. The extensive programme of additional visits, activities, clubs and residential experiences is the strongest part of an already excellent curriculum. It is hard to imagine space for more activities, which range from theatre, sport, dance, music, robotics and chess to regular science trips, workshops and competitions. The take-up of clubs is so good that many simply cannot fit in more pupils or students.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school creates a positive and supportive atmosphere that offers a safe learning environment with high standards of care. Procedures for keeping pupils and students safe are generally very rigorous although some record-keeping is not sufficiently consistent. School lunches, however, do not always meet pupils' own high standards for healthy food. Staff have a detailed understanding of pupils' and students' emotional and medical needs and support them very effectively. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe and secure at school although some express anxiety about the behaviour of a few pupils. The guidance and support given to pupils and students to help them reach high standards are excellent. Pupils and parents are involved in extensive target setting and pupils are helped to reach quite challenging targets. Every subject teacher records pupils' progress towards these targets each half term and pupils are continually encouraged to aim high. Pupils and students are very well prepared for, and informed about, their future options, through a structured careers programme, effective transition planning and very good school and college links.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding, and this has ensured that pupils have made such excellent progress over a number of years. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is excellent. No aspect of the school is left to chance and parents, pupils, the local authority and other stakeholders are systematically consulted. The concerns of the school council, for example, are always acted upon. The only area of relative weakness, is the limited involvement of all staff, particularly those in the sixth form, in the process. Governors hold the school to account, and their role in maintaining the high standards is substantial. Leaders know their school very well. The way the leaders and managers direct improvement is good rather than excellent because the roles and lines of accountability for middle managers are unclear. This results in pockets of inconsistent practice in teaching, assessment, in the sixth form, for pupils with ASD and for the rapidly increasing number of pupils with more complex learning difficulties. The headteacher has a clear grasp of the process of school improvement planning and is perceptive in understanding the priorities. The school provides outstanding equal opportunities for pupils regardless of their difficulties, and extensive links with other agencies, schools and colleges enable many pupils to be included in mainstream lessons and other activities wherever possible. The accommodation is not fully fit for purpose, but plans for a new and refurbished building are well under way to support the continuation of the outstanding education being offered.

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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>	1	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<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>	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<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	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<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	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 Pupils and Students, Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming to us when we visited Exhall Grange; we enjoyed the time we spent with you very much. We can see why you find the school such a good place to learn. We also enjoyed meeting the staff and joining you for lunch and some of your lessons. What we liked most about your school:

- how much you learn and what exceptionally good progress you make towards your targets and qualifications
- how much you contribute to the way the school is run
- the mature way you behave, help others, and work so hard in lessons
- the large number of interesting subjects and activities you undertake
- the way the staff really care for you and guide you in your work
- how you are helped to move on to a bright future.

What we have asked the school to do now to make it even better:

- improve the support given to your teachers, so that every single one of you is able to do your very best in the way that is easiest for you.

We wish you all the very best in the future, Yours sincerely, Mrs. Patricia Pothecary Lead Inspector