



# Hallmoor School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 103610  
**Local Authority** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 286704  
**Inspection dates** 1–2 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Steven Parker

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Hallmoor Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Kitts Green
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19		Birmingham B33 9QY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 7833972
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	186	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 7833481
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	46		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Pam Woods
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Charvis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2001		

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Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–19	1–2 November 2006	286704

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This all-age school provides for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties. The school is on two sites, with younger pupils in the main school and older pupils working at the Mirfield building. Its character has changed considerably since it was last inspected as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and admissions into the primary department indicate that pupils' learning needs are becoming more complex. Over a third of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of these speak English as an additional language. Pupils arrive in the school throughout the school year, many having been excluded from mainstream schools. There is only one child in the Foundation Stage, 46 students in the sixth form and more than twice as many boys as girls. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from areas of high social disadvantage and there are 10 pupils in the care of the local authority. There are two planned new settings for the school; one for the primary department to move onto a neighbouring mainstream primary school site next year and the other to accommodate the secondary department and sixth form on a nearby secondary school site in the next two or three years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Hallmoor is a good school where the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for pupils ensures that their personal development is excellent and most behaviour is exemplary. All pupils' attainment on entry is well below national expectations. Many join the school from mainstream schools, often as late as Year 11. Most have experienced failure and unhappiness there, and are frequently transformed in a very short time. They thrive and often go on to make excellent progress in their studies. One girl told an inspector: 'I couldn't read or write when I first arrived here, and now I'm taking GCSE English.' Although standards are below average, all pupils make good overall progress and achieve well, including those who experience the Foundation Stage. Most gain creditable results in a wide range of exams, either at the end Key Stage 4 or in the sixth form. These good outcomes are the result of good teaching, which is both lively and focused, with class teams working exceptionally well together. Staff know their pupils' needs well, but teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to inform their planning of future work.

The school has a strong ethos of mutual respect, because relationships are of very high quality. Pupils value the kindness and support they receive. This makes them feel safe, secure and valued as individuals, so that they confidently seek to meet the ambitious targets set for them. They thoroughly enjoy their time in school and become confident, mature young adults, well prepared for their life beyond school. The developing work of learning mentors makes a significant contribution to this success. A good, relevant curriculum, enhanced by an impressive range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, ensures that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Much has been done to make the best of the buildings on both sites, but the Mirfield secondary department is housed in inadequate accommodation.

Leadership and management are good. The visionary headteacher has provided inspirational leadership to all her staff and works very effectively with her able new leadership team colleagues. Together, they are successfully helping the wider management team to meet the responsibilities they have been assigned for their departments and subjects. Whilst this distributed approach to management promises improved practice, and middle managers appreciate the autonomy they are being given, the model is not yet fully established. The school knows itself well and inspectors agree with its overall evaluation. It does not yet, however, use the considerable information it gathers about its work to best effect to inform its improvement planning, as it responds to the increasingly complex needs of pupils joining the school. Governors are very professional and effective in the way they support and challenge the school. Hallmoor has developed and sustained successful partnerships with parents, other services, agencies and schools. Its long-established outreach services are much valued by schools, colleges and other professionals locally and across the city. The school has a track record of sustained improvement and has a good capacity to continue improving its provision.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The high quality of provision in the sixth form has been maintained since the last inspection, despite the problems associated with burgeoning pupil numbers and increased vandalism of the Mirfield building and its contents. Students follow relevant courses within the school or in local colleges which give them a range of skills that they can use when they leave, and which accredit their learning with certificates. They appreciate the relevant work-related learning opportunities provided for them and the fact that staff treat them as young adults whose views deserve respect.

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

- Use assessment data better to inform teaching and learning and school improvement planning, in order to fully meet the needs of its increasingly complex population.
- Consolidate the effectiveness of new middle managers in contributing to improving teaching and learning.
- Work in collaboration with the local authority to expedite the agreed moves to more suitable premises as a matter of urgency.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

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

Standards are below average, but pupils make good progress and achieve well, especially when considering the often negative experience that many of them have had in mainstream schools, prior to coming to Hallmoor. All pupils make better progress in mathematics and science than they do in English. A strong focus has been placed on the teaching of literacy, especially reading, to bring pupils' performance up to the level in mathematics and science. No matter when they arrive in school, pupils get off to a good start in developing their communication and social skills. This then equips them to achieve well across all other subjects and, by the end of their time in school, gain good results in accredited courses. Throughout the school, pupils achieve impressive results in practical subjects, such as art and design and physical education. Successful learning of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology means that they are well placed to benefit from the next stage of their education. Girls and boys, pupils with different needs and the significant number of looked after children all achieve equally well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well being are outstanding and attendance is very good. Excellent relationships between all adults and pupils lead to pupils becoming

confident as learners and comfortable in going to staff when they are troubled or in need of help with their learning. Behaviour is outstanding overall, as a result of the structured approach the school has to managing any challenge. Temporary exclusions are high because the school consciously uses this option as a way of promoting acceptable behaviour amongst that small group of pupils who have serious difficulties in learning to control their own behaviour. As a result, the great majority of these pupils make very good progress in improving their behaviour. Pupils appreciate this straightforward approach and one of them expressed the view that 'when I started at Mirfield I was a proper terror, but now I am a decent guy and am being trained as a mentor'. The mentoring of younger children by older pupils is a highly effective approach to creating a sense of community and personal responsibility. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils display a good awareness of and respect for cultural diversity as a result of the emphasis given to this in assemblies and on special days for different faiths. Older pupils develop good workplace and independence skills because of the highly relevant range of activities they experience. Pupils clearly enjoy school. They have many opportunities to be physically active, compete against other schools and learn the value of eating healthily. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of teaching is good overall, with some outstanding lessons seen. This helps pupils to learn successfully. There is very strong teamwork between teachers and their able teaching assistants to support learning and to manage any challenging behaviour very effectively. Pupils' contributions are valued and they are consequently confident and happy to be active participants in lessons, which are lively and motivating. In most lessons, pupils are made aware of learning objectives and their progress against them is recognised and celebrated. Well presented teaching materials, as well as good use of the community to bring subjects alive, engage pupils in their learning. In the majority of lessons, good quality planning takes full account of the range of needs in the group, so that all pupils learn equally well. However, not all teachers are consistently using assessment information effectively to inform their planning. As a result, all the pupils in a class are occasionally given the same task, so that some pupils struggle with what they have to do and others find the work too easy. There is regular checking of pupils' work and recording of their achievements over time. The school recognises the need to bring teachers together regularly to ensure that their judgements of achievement and progress are consistent.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

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

The curriculum is good. It provides relevant experiences for pupils across a wide range of activities and meets all National Curriculum requirements. There is an appropriately strong focus on developing pupils' social, communication and numeracy skills, so that they can function as independently as possible. The range of nationally accredited courses at the end of Key Stage 4 is relatively narrow, but increasingly good at the end of the sixth form. The school is very aware of its changing population and is seeking to develop further opportunities for pupils to have their work accredited. Extra-curricular provision is excellent, especially the sporting activities, outdoor education and residential visits, which all pupils happily participate in at each key stage, gaining enormous benefit in their social development and self-esteem. Pupils' additional needs are very well met through successful collaborative work with a range of visiting professionals. Work related learning is good and the Connexions Service makes a strong contribution to this. The inadequacy of accommodation for the sixth form limits what can be taught and how learning can occur. Staff work outstandingly well to minimise the effects of this shortcoming and arrangements are good for older pupils to spend time learning in other settings. The pupils at Mirfield have been encouraged to decorate the corridors and rooms with lively displays, which make the actual teaching areas welcoming and lively.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

The quality of care guidance and support is outstanding, with learning mentors making a significant contribution to its effectiveness through their pro-active support of individual pupils and their families with the most significant difficulties. Arrangements for child protection are rigorous and fully meet legislative requirements, with both staff and pupils knowing what to do if they have any concerns about their safety. Medical procedures for the large group of pupils with particular needs are exemplary, as are risk assessments to ensure pupils' health and safety across all activities within and visits outside of school. Approaches to supporting and encouraging good behaviour are outstanding, especially for primary pupils new to the school, and through the sixth form student council, which empowers young people to take real collective responsibility for their own actions and consequences. Strategies for supporting learning in individual subjects are satisfactory and developing rapidly. Those for English are the best and provide an excellent model that others are actively following and making good improvements in so doing. As a result, pupils are receiving increasingly well focused academic guidance. The requirements of statements of special educational need are met in full. The school works very hard and successfully to establish and nurture partnerships with parents and carers, so that they can support their children's personal development and learning. Parents are particularly appreciative of this aspect of the

school's work. A number of parents provide much valued support in the school by working alongside staff as volunteers.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's outstanding leadership, through the example of her child-centred approach and energy and commitment, has ensured continuity of quality across the school since the last inspection. She works in a successful partnership with her recently appointed senior leadership colleagues, who have brought a valuable fresh perspective into the school, together with a highly experienced and effective bursar. The newly extended team of managers is already providing well focused leadership in assigned areas of responsibility, although they are not yet fully effective in their roles.

The overall high quality of leadership and management has a strong impact on the achievement of pupils and the progress they make, for example, for younger pupils in developing their communication and social skills and for older pupils in gaining accredited qualifications. Good self-evaluation processes are well established and the views of parents, pupils, governors and other professionals are carefully considered. Consequently, the school's view of itself is accurate, if a little modest, and its prioritised areas for improvement are relevant. The school does not however make full use of the significant data it gathers to analyse and plan. The budget has been well managed, in a good strategic partnership with governors, to ensure that necessary improvements have been made to the accommodation and learning resources. Governors have also been very active and supportive in promoting the planned relocations of the school. Good management of resources has also made it possible for the school to continue providing much appreciated, high quality outreach support to the wider education community.





## 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>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	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	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	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	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your help during the inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you all and seeing your work. We also found it helpful to talk to the members of the school and student councils. We agree with your view that you go to a good school.

Some of the things we liked about your school:

- It was clear that you enjoy school very much and get on well with each other. This is probably why your behaviour and attendance are so good.
- The staff give you a good range of exciting and useful things to do, so that you do well in your studies.
- You are lucky to have good teachers and lots of other adults to encourage you and look after you extremely well.
- Those pupils that have had bad experiences in other schools change very quickly for the better, like their new school and get on extremely well.
- Teachers know you very well and always try to plan work that is right for you. For a small number of pupils this does always work as well as it could.
- It helps your families to help you and they really appreciate this.
- It knows what it is good at and what it needs to do to be even better.
- Your headteacher, all the staff and the governors do their very best to make sure your time in the school is the best you can have.

We thought your school could be even better if:

- It makes better use of all the information it collects about how well you are learning when it plans your lessons and improvements to the school.
- It makes sure that all staff with management responsibility are helped to do their work the best they can.
- You were all working in better buildings.