



The Samuel Cody School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116640
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290574
Inspection dates 21–22 September 2006
Reporting inspector Kiran Campbell-Platt

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Lynchford Road
School category	Community		Farnborough
Age range of pupils	11–16		GU14 6BJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01252314720
Number on roll (school)	99	Fax number	01252341869
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr. Nigel Baines
		Headteacher	Mrs Anna Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	21–22 September 2006	290574

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized special school. All pupils have statements of special educational need. The majority of pupils have moderate learning difficulties with increasing numbers of those with additional learning difficulties such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and behavioural and emotional difficulties. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average. The majority of pupils enter school with well below average learning and social skills. The school's population is mainly White British with small numbers from other ethnic groups. Very few are at the early stages of learning English. A very small number are looked after.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features justifying the views of the staff, governors and parents. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership with a rigorous focus on raising achievement. Self evaluation is a regular feature of the work of the school and is used systematically to identify priorities and to improve provision. The school's ethos of commitment to learning and respect for pupils as individuals is shared by all staff and is a strength of the school. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning. Care, guidance and support are good and this results in pupils making good gains in developing confidence, social and learning skills. The school works well with parents and external agencies for the benefit of pupils.

Pupils achieve well although standards are well below average. Teaching and learning is good and pupils benefit from specialist teaching and make good progress in all subject areas. Teachers make effective use of very good assessment information on individual pupils to match work and teaching methods closely to their needs. This results in pupils making exceptionally good progress from the time that they enter school with most pupils reaching their targets. Indeed the progress made by pupils is in the best 5% of schools nationally. However, the school is not complacent and its own analysis shows that in some lessons more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and that those with ASD do not achieve as well as they might in practical subjects such as physical education. Assessment data is used effectively to track the progress of individuals but is not yet being used systematically to analyse the performance of different groups of pupils, such as the more able. As a result, targets are not always as challenging for these pupils as they might be. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and now offers a wide range of opportunities for accreditation for older pupils of different abilities.

Good progress has been made on issues for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. For example curriculum time has been extended to meet national guidance, provision for music is now good and governors play a strategic role in the school's development. Although the school makes increased use of local provision for older pupils, this is yet to be developed to enhance enrichment opportunities for pupils in years 7 to 9. The school has a strong capacity to sustain and improve further the quality of the education it provides.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information more effectively to set challenging targets for more able pupils and for Autistic Spectrum Disorder pupils in practical subjects such as PE
- Extend partnerships with local schools to enrich the curriculum for years 7 to 9.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and progress are good. Pupils enter school with a wide range of attainment but it is well below average overall. They make good progress and achieve well against their learning targets although the standards they achieve at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are well below average. Pupils achieve well against the targets set for their end of Year 9 national tests in science, mathematics and English. Their achievements in GCSEs and entry level qualifications are good with most pupils meeting or exceeding their target grades. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language or are looked after are well supported and also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good and are supported by the strong ethos of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school. In the words of a parent of a year 11 pupil, 'My son has always been very happy to go to school. He has developed and matured a great deal, socially as well as academically'. Attendance has improved consistently since the last inspection and is now average. The school has worked hard with pupils, parents and external services and met and exceeded attendance targets for the last school year. Pupils have good relationships with teachers and with each other and say that they enjoy working in pairs and groups. They feel safe around school. Behaviour is good. The school council is effective, for example, in improving healthy options in school meals. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop an understanding of their own and other cultures through art, music and trips to museums and theatres. They reflect thoughtfully on moral and spiritual themes in assemblies. They say that they enjoy the sporting activities in PE lessons and the after school club and gain further awareness of healthy living in food technology, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and theme days. They feel well informed about choices for their future through careers education, and understand money management through PSHE and work-related learning. They contribute to the local community through fund-raising activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers know their pupils well and planning is generally securely based on individual needs. Behaviour management methods are consistently applied across the school and are effective in minimising disruptions to learning. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and make good progress overall. They benefit from the enthusiasm of specialist subject teachers. For example, in a very good Year 11 art lesson, the teacher was effective in helping pupils to

understand how to use their feelings to draw from the 'inside-out' through an excellent range of visual images. Teachers use information and communications technology (ICT) effectively and design activities to suit the different learning styles of pupils so that they are engaged and motivated throughout the lesson. Learning support assistants are deployed well and give good support to those with additional difficulties. Occasionally teachers spend too much time talking so that pupils begin to lose interest; in some lessons, more able pupils are not fully challenged and find the work too easy. The school has correctly identified the need to develop peer and self assessment across the school so that pupils are supported in developing higher order learning skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and well matched to the needs of the different groups of pupils. It is enriched by theme days, for example, on healthy living, enterprise education and subject related trips such as visits to places of worship. Pupils learn about Health and Safety in PSHE. Provision for English, mathematics and ICT is good. Improvements since the last inspection include increased curriculum time which now meets national guidance. Provision for music is now good and includes a specialist teacher. There are extended opportunities for accreditation for older pupils of different abilities through GCSEs, entry level courses and the Youth Award Scheme. The school has good partnerships with local colleges and employers but the use of local provision in schools to enrich the curriculum for pupils in years 7 to 9 is not well developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of the care, guidance and support that pupils receive is evident in the school's daily life. They are well supervised and treated with respect and consideration. Child protection procedures are robust and risk assessments are carried out regularly. Monitoring of pupils' academic, social and behavioural progress is rigorous and a strength of the school. Targets set in individual education plans are reviewed regularly. Pupils' daily effort and achievement in lessons are scored by teachers and these are used as an effective method for identifying difficulties quickly. Pupils are secure in the knowledge that there is always an adult they can turn to. One pupil commented, 'Teachers are always there to listen'. Pupils with additional difficulties such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder and behavioural and emotional difficulties are supported through additional enrichment sessions. The school works in close partnership with other agencies, for example, to improve attendance. Parents appreciate the close partnership they have with staff and the overwhelming majority praise the care and support their children receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. A strength is the strong and effective leadership provided by the headteacher who has a rigorous focus on improving pupils' achievement and personal development. The experienced senior management team play an active part in whole school improvement. They track the progress and achievement of pupils in each subject. Very good use is made of assessment information to ensure equality of access to school activities and to evaluate outcomes for individual pupils. As a result, pupils generally make good progress and achieve well against their targets and in national tests and examinations. However, the school is yet to use assessment data fully to identify differences in the patterns of achievement of different groups of pupils. For example, more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they might in all subjects and the school is not yet using this data robustly to ensure that they are always set challenging targets. The school has effective systems for self-evaluation which involve all staff and inform school improvement priorities. The regular monitoring of teaching is effective in improving consistency of good practice across the school, for example, in the use of ICT. There are opportunities for staff development through peer observation and mentoring. Support staff are deployed effectively. The vast majority of parents praise the work of staff in helping their children to enjoy their learning and to achieve. The governing body is effective in its role as a 'critical friend' to the leadership team. Financial management is secure.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

I would like to thank you for your help and contributions to the inspection. I enjoyed talking to you in your lessons about your work and the activities in which you are involved. It was a pleasure speaking to members of the school council and finding out about how well staff listen to your views about the school's work.

I found your school to be a good school with several outstanding features. It confirms your parents' views. Your headteacher gives very good leadership for improving the school. All the staff are very committed to making sure that you enjoy school activities and achieve well. You told me that teachers are always there to listen to your concerns. The school uses targets well to help you to make good progress. You feel safe and told me that you are well supervised in breaks. You have good attitudes to learning and you told me about the different activities that teachers plan for you in lessons to make them interesting. The subjects and activities planned by the school are well-matched to your needs. As a result of this, your progress and achievement in subjects and your social development are good.

There are some things that the school needs to do to improve further. It needs to find out how well different groups of pupils in your school are doing and to use this information to make sure that everyone achieves as well as they could. It also needs to improve its partnerships with local schools for enrichment activities for younger pupils.

Kiran Campbell-Platt

Lead inspector