



Northcott School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118138
Local Authority Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number 291033
Inspection dates 14–15 September 2006
Reporting inspector John Atkinson

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Dulverton Close
School category	Community special		Bransholme, Hull
Age range of pupils	5–16		HU7 4EL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01482 825311
Number on roll (school)	109	Fax number	01482 822253
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Smith
		Headteacher	Mr Mel Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–16	14–15 September 2006	291033

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Northcott is a large special school for children with autism, communication difficulties, medical problems, sensory disabilities, learning difficulties and emotional difficulties. There is also an outreach service, training and advising mainstream schools on the management of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The school has many awards and accreditations including the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark, the International School Award and Artsmark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Northcott is an outstanding school that gives excellent value for money. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and thrive in an atmosphere where staff have high expectations of how well they will achieve and behave. The view of the school council is that, “this is a fantastic school” and it is hard to disagree! The ethos of the school is the driving force behind its many successes. Throughout the day there is a calm, structured and purposeful approach to every aspect of school life. This secure framework underpins the very safe and secure environment that emerges and enables pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities to glow with confidence and happiness. The dedicated staff give exemplary support to every pupil and every pupil feels that they are truly valued and respected. The relationships between staff and pupils are such that pupils are totally confident in sharing any anxieties or problems. As one pupil with ASD stated, “all problems are sorted out quickly and fairly”.

Pupils participate in an amazing amount of exciting events and activities resulting in them making excellent progress in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. From poets, musicians, theatre groups to dancers, pupils are inspired to enjoy and ‘have a go’ at developing new skills in areas that they would have previously avoided because of lack of confidence or fear of failure. It is no surprise that attendance is outstanding and participation in additional school activities is also very high.

Pupils’ achievements are outstanding. They make excellent progress in the basic skills because they are taught rigorously. Teachers monitor their progress closely and challenging targets are set so that pupils know what they have to aim for. Pupils start school with achievements that are often poor and with negative attitudes towards learning. By the time they leave school they achieve excellent results in accredited courses for key skills and more able pupils achieve a clutch of GCSEs. Recently a number of able pupils have joined the school in Key Stage 3. They are making very good progress and the school has plans to extend its range of accredited courses to challenge them as they get older. They reach a high standard in information and communication technology (ICT) skills, have very constructive work related experiences and receive very good advice about what they can do next. Therefore pupils have an excellent understanding of how they can make a successful future for themselves.

Pupils’ personal development is also outstanding. Their behaviour and the respect they have for each other, the staff, the community and the school environment are exemplary. Undoubtedly this is a reflection of the teaching and care, guidance and support they receive. Pupils’ health is a top priority for the school and the programme to support healthy lifestyles is extensive. This includes over two hours of physical education a week and a host of healthy eating and drinking options. The outcome is that pupils are fit and extremely conscious of the importance of taking personal responsibility for their health habits. Teaching is often outstanding and never less than good. Lessons are taught with energy and enthusiasm. Activities are challenging and fun. ICT brings learning alive and the use of a wide range of teaching and learning styles ensures that the needs of all pupils are fully catered for.

Behind all of this outstanding practice lies a leadership that sustains high quality and drives forward new initiatives. The headteacher provides great support to all staff and leads by example, resulting in a staff team with high morale, high expectations and oozing in confidence. The effect is that they are keen to be innovative in the pursuit of excellence. The governing body support and challenge the school so that it remains on its toes in striving for the best. Governors are very skilled in celebrating the school's successes as well as probing and prompting it in the search for the very best for the pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the number and range of accredited courses in Key Stage 4 for the higher attaining pupils that are now in Key Stage 3

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in reading and spelling and good progress in writing. The gains made are, on occasion, staggering and the impact is particularly beneficial on pupils' confidence and self-esteem. In science and mathematics pupils also do exceptionally well with 50% of pupils achieving a pass in GCSE. Pupils with ASD achieve exceptionally well in improving their social interaction and communication skills and often this leads to pupils accessing and completing a number of accredited courses. Across the curriculum, for example in physical education, history, modern foreign languages, art and music, pupils make enormous strides and the overall impact is that pupils are developing a wide range of skills that will significantly assist them in their further learning and in work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development and are very well equipped for when they leave school. Routines are very well established and clear boundaries are defined so pupils know what is expected of them. The effect is that pupils feel secure and safe from any form of harassment leading to exemplary behaviour and respect for every aspect of the whole school community. The structured reward system celebrates pupils' successes and is very effective in building and boosting their self-esteem. Pupils are exceptionally health conscious and participate extensively in the wide array of sporting activities offered by staff and sporting coaches. Pupils are very active in community activities and raise money for a nominated charity each term, increasing their awareness of the needs of others and how they can make a positive contribution to helping them. The school council is an active forum that pupils aspire to be elected to. Members are at ease in voicing their opinions and respond maturely to the responsibilities that membership carries. All pupils, including those with autism, follow work related programmes resulting in the acquisition of appropriate skills to prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching has many significant strengths that result in very good gains in learning. Information and communication technology is used very effectively in making learning exciting and capturing and sustaining pupils' interest and attention. Teachers are enthusiastic and often passionate about their subjects; for example, the deputy headteacher's teaching of science is inspirational and leads to pupils making enormous progress in their learning. Lessons are thoroughly planned with challenging activities for pupils of all abilities. Pupils are frequently engaged in active, creative and collaborative tasks. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and constantly challenge them through skilful questioning, increasing their speaking and listening skills. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and establish a positive learning climate where pupils feel well supported.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum and its enrichment are outstanding. There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to participate in. They are enormously influential in motivating pupils and widening their horizons with the effect that pupils develop a love of learning and a desire to experiment in new activities. Regular visitors to the school create an air of excitement among pupils and introducing them to their special skills results in significant progress in pupils' personal, social and academic skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is a very safe and caring school where pupils feel valued and respected. Parents feel their children are well looked after and are pleased with their progress academically and personally. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are very thorough and this means that the most vulnerable or at-risk pupils are quickly identified and supported. Child protection arrangements and those to ensure everyone's health, welfare and safety are in place. The guidance that pupils receive is extensive and pupils are made very aware of what their targets are and how they can achieve them. This means that pupils do not feel overawed by the challenges they face and the support they receive helps them to be determined to do their best. Pupils with autism receive very good levels of care and support that enable them to take full advantage of what is on offer in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership in setting out a clear vision for the school and is very well supported by the senior leadership team who are outstanding role models in their teaching and monitoring positions. The deputy headteacher has an outstanding grasp of tracking pupils' progress and target setting, resulting in the excellent achievement of all pupils, regardless of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The assistant headteacher gives excellent leadership in the autistic provision and is instrumental in developing staff's skills leading to very effective use of specialist teaching techniques. This results in high levels of inclusion in all that the school offers. The high quality of leadership and management throughout the school means that staff feel a full part of a team that continues to strive for excellence and is undaunted by new challenges.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

17 September 2006

To the pupils of:

Northcott School

Dulverton Close

Bransholme

Hull

HU7 4EL

Dear Pupils

I really enjoyed the two days that I spent in your school last week. Thank you for making me welcome and sharing your opinions about the school. I was very impressed by the way that you helped each other, made sure that everybody had friends and showed respect for the school environment. I entirely agree with your views about the fantastic things that are available to you. You have many wonderful activities to take part in. I think you should be proud that you go to an outstanding school and proud of your own achievements. Your school is excellent because:

- the staff help you to learn in every subject and make learning fun
- you all work so well together and have great respect for each other
- the staff know you can succeed and you work hard to prove them right
- your behaviour is exceptional.

I think that you can help yourselves and the school by continuing with your very positive attitudes and hard work. It is really important that you make the most out of the opportunities school provides for you because then you can achieve well in your exams and choose the right college course to help you in the future.

I hope you carry on working hard all year and continue to be as helpful to each other as I saw when I was in school.

WELL DONE!

John Atkinson

Lead inspector