

Humberston Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118143
Local Authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	291035
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	90
6th form	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Peggy Ingham
Headteacher	Mr Andy Zielinski
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2003
School address	St Thomas Close Humberston Grimsby DN36 4HS
Telephone number	01472 590645
Fax number	01472 590643

Age group	3–19
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Inspection number	291035

© Crown copyright 2007

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

All pupils have severe, profound or multiple learning difficulties and disabilities. Significant groups of pupils have physical difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds but there has been a trend in recent years for more pupils to come from families with a greater than average degree of social and economic disadvantage. On entry, most pupils are at the very earliest stages of learning and personal development. A few pupils join the school other than in the Foundation Stage, all of them operating below Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Nearly all pupils are from White British families. Five are looked after by the local authority. Boys outnumber girls by about two to one.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is a wonderful school. It has many outstanding features. Excellent leadership, management and governance have contributed enormously to improvement in the past and ensure that the school maintains an outstanding capacity to keep getting better. Leaders and managers effectively focus on improving pupils' lives. They recognise that achievement in terms of personal development and the ability to communicate is crucial to improving pupils' future prospects.

Pupils make excellent progress in meeting their personal targets and achieve well in their academic work. Because of their learning difficulties and disabilities it is not realistic to compare standards with national expectations or averages. Some pupils will never move beyond the earliest stages of learning. Others progress from this stage to reaching the early levels of the National Curriculum. The outstanding curriculum ensures that many Year 11 pupils start to follow courses leading to accreditation, which are completed in the sixth form. The school is in an excellent position to extend the range of these courses. Staff meticulously assess and record all signs of progress, however small. This is especially so in the Foundation Stage, where a particularly good picture of each child is drawn up to enable precise targets to be set for future learning and development. From there on, good teaching ensures that pupils meet with a high degree of success in meeting their learning and communication targets and excellent progress in improving their personal, social and physical skills. This pattern continues through the school. There are some outstanding features in lessons which can be shared across staff to make teaching and learning even better.

Parents say their children love coming to school. This is no surprise. A hugely varied timetable, with many interesting and exciting activities contributes enormously to pupils' enjoyment and their excellent attendance. Comments in the 'Visitors' Book' sum the school up. 'Open and inviting, can't believe how happy the children are' and 'lots of smiling children', are but two of many similar comments. Huge attention is paid to helping pupils stay healthy. Regular, short periods of exercise punctuate the school day and pupils understand the importance of eating healthy foods. Good, sensible behaviour and an environment that is free of any form of bullying or harassment ensure that pupils feel safe. They know and appreciate the fact that they are important members of the school community and they contribute well to brightening the lives of others in the locality. The high emphasis on personal development means that pupils have an excellent preparation for their future lives.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

All of the attributes of the main school apply to the sixth form. In recent years, all Year 11 pupils have chosen to stay in school for a further three years. Students are delightful and make good progress in their studies. This is most clearly reflected in the fact that last year every student gained accreditation reflecting their understanding of basic skills from the national awards body ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). For each of the last four years more and more students have been going on to full time education when they leave. Students enjoy the status of being sixth formers and do what they can to help staff and younger pupils. They are exceptionally polite and friendly and many are developing important independence skills, allowing them to use public transport on their own and to attend college.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work towards ensuring that all teaching matches that of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The nature of pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities means they cannot meet the standard reached by learners nationally. Achievement in the classroom is good for all groups of pupils because they are well taught and keen to learn. Progress was good in all the lessons visited during the inspection.

Between subjects, there is not much difference in achievement. The school has identified writing as the weakest strand of English and has put in place good measures to address this. These have not been in place long enough to measure their success. Coupled with the outstanding advances made in their personal development it is very clear that pupils are making excellent progress overall, a view that is fully endorsed by parents.

Nearly all pupils join the school at the very earliest stages of learning and development. Many have no powers of communication. Those pupils with the most profound difficulties frequently leave school still in the earliest stages of learning and development but nearly always with the ability to communicate through tiny bodily movements or through the use of technological aids. A few pupils do not make progress because of deteriorating conditions but their good achievement can be seen in the way this deterioration is slowed. Pupils with little or no speech, often those with Autism, make excellent progress in improving their communication skills through the use of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) or through the systematic use of symbols or photos to express themselves. The most able pupils occasionally leave school having reached Level 2 of the National Curriculum, but more usually they are working towards Level 1.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school excels here. In every respect of pupils' personal development and well-being the outcomes are outstanding and this changes pupils' lives for the better. This is hugely important to parents and immensely valuable in securing brighter futures for pupils. Pupils of all ages are wholehearted in their love of school and they are keen to share this with visitors. For many the end of term is tinged with regret rather than excitement. Pupils attend whenever they can and often when, for medical reasons, they should not. Outstanding social and moral development is clearly illustrated by pupils' excellent behaviour and in the way they get on with each other and with staff. Nearly all misbehaviour is associated with pupils' recognised difficulties rather than deliberate..

Pupils develop an exceptionally good awareness of how important it is to avoid accidents by moving around school sensibly. They take heed of good advice for keeping themselves safe out of school. They learn how not to attract unwelcome attention, for instance, by being over-familiar with strangers or showing off valuable possessions. Outstanding spiritual development shines through in pupils' own happiness and their care and concern for others

younger or less able than themselves. Pupils learn how much pleasure they can give to others, often through school events where they entertain the elderly and also by regular fundraising for charities. A large number of activities gives pupils insights into local culture and the characteristics and influences of other cultures. Pupils are exceptionally aware of the importance of cultivating healthy habits. Most are keen to take exercise and recognise the importance of eating healthy foods.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Good teaching and learning is the norm. Records of classroom observations show that anything less than good is a rarity and that there are some outstanding features. Teachers recognise that there are many instances where the importance of promoting pupils' personal development and communication skills becomes more important than pursuing academic progress. This sometimes slows academic achievement but when the benefits of outstanding personal development are taken into account it becomes very clear that pupils are making outstanding overall progress.

A welcome characteristic of all teaching is the exemplary way in which teachers plan for each individual, taking into account the targets in individual education plans and the guidance in behaviour and care plans. Teachers confidently manage large classroom teams, a task not made easier by a recent high turnover of classroom assistants. The effect of this turnover is that occasionally, pupils are given either more support than they need or left alone for too long by inexperienced staff. The school has already taken action to address this issue. More often though, assistants play a huge part in helping pupils to learn, often taking the lead role in teaching groups of pupils. Many staff are exceptionally skilled in making use of well-established systems for helping pupils to learn and communicate. These include PECS, Sulp (social use of language programme) and TEACCH (treatment and education of autistic and related communication handicapped children). Behaviour associated with autism is skilfully managed to avoid lessons being unduly interrupted and allowing other pupils to carry on learning. Lessons usually end with good, short sessions in which pupils are encouraged to communicate what they have learned. This greatly helps teachers to assess individual learning and adds to the frequently perceptive observations by staff of the tiny steps through which many pupils make progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The outstanding curriculum underpins much of the school's success. It is very innovative and goes well beyond statutory requirements. All learners benefit greatly from the meticulous attention which is paid to each individual's specific requirements. Communication is a priority with a great deal of attention being given to making sure that pupils can express themselves and signal their choices. There is no fixed approach to this; whatever works for an individual is used. Basic skills are strongly promoted alongside excellent personal, social and health education, which helps pupils to stay healthy, safe and valued as members of the community.

Wherever possible, more able pupils are found places in mainstream schools where they can demonstrate their ability to succeed outside of a special school setting. The main obstacle to extending this is parental concern. Most think their children will get a better education at Humberston Park. Older pupils have extensive opportunities to prepare for adult life. The school is in an excellent position to extend the range of accredited courses in Key Stage 4 even further. Physical needs are treated as of the utmost importance. There is an extremely high awareness of the benefits pupils get from exercise and improving posture. A very large number of activities enrich the curriculum, take learning out of the classroom and give pupils experiences they could never hope for outside school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

This is an extremely safe and supportive school, where pupils receive excellent care and guidance. There is a total commitment to ensuring that pupils are looked after as well as possible. In this, the inspector agrees with the overwhelmingly supportive views of parents. Care is taken to check the background of all adults working in the school, all staff share a full understanding of child protection issues, potential risk in any activity is always assessed and there are regular health and safety checks. Pupils may not realise that all this is going on in the background but they benefit immensely from the happy and secure environment that it creates.

An extremely close eye is kept on all learners to guide their future learning. Any who appear to be struggling are quickly identified and extra help, including the involvement of specialists from outside the school, is rapidly put in place. Parents are fully involved in making decisions that affect their children. The skill with which staff recognise the advances being made in learning and personal development is exceptional. Every slight improvement is noticed, recorded and used to plan for future progress. This underpins the school's successful support for its learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership, management and governance is outstanding. Leaders are modest in their accomplishments, they tend to underrate the school's effectiveness. The monitoring and evaluation of every aspect of the school's performance are exceptionally perceptive and give staff a clear lead as to how they can improve the lives of pupils and give them better prospects. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an exceptionally strong team who listen and learn with open minds and have no predetermined agenda other than securing the best for their pupils. The school is in a strong position to work towards ensuring that all teaching matches that of the best. Parents are extremely supportive, over half of them responded to a questionnaire sent out before the inspection, all but one praised the leadership and management of the school, the standards it promoted and the progress their children were making. The governing body are extremely effective. They support, criticise and act to ensure that children achieve as well as possible in all aspects of their work and life when they attend Humberston Park School.

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.

Annex A

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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 the Foundation Stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
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	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?	2	2
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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

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	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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

Humberston Park School

St Thomas Close

Humberston

Grimsby

DN36 4HS

22 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making my visit to your school so worthwhile. I very much enjoyed meeting you. In particular I would like to thank the school council who cooked me dinner and told me what you thought about the school. I was pleased to hear that you think the school is every bit as good as I do.

I visit schools like yours to find out what they are good at and what could be improved. Your school is outstanding.

- You are well taught and make excellent progress.
- Your behaviour, attendance and attitudes are excellent.
- You are exceptionally well looked after.
- Your timetable is filled with interesting and exciting things.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors know exactly what they are doing to make your lives better.

I have asked your teachers to share all the best bits of their teaching with each other.

I won't forget my visit; it was a rare pleasure.

Yours sincerely,

Alastair Younger

(Lead inspector)