

Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School, Horsham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126160
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293478
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Megee

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	38
6th form	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Meredith
Headteacher	Lesley Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2001
School address	Comptons Lane Horsham RH13 5NW
Telephone number	01403 266215
Fax number	01403 270109

Age group	4–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is situated on the edge of Horsham, and admits pupils from across the town and the surrounding area. Most pupils are White British and a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Half of the pupils have severe learning difficulties and a third have profound and multiple learning difficulties. The remainder have autism or moderate learning difficulties.

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 in which all pupils, including children in Reception and post-16 students, achieve well in their studies and make outstanding progress in their personal development. Good leadership and effective teamwork, coupled with a concentrated focus on each individual pupil, lie at the heart of the school's success, and parents greatly appreciate what the school offers. A comment typical of parents' views was, 'My son was at mainstream school and came here recently. He now always has a smile on his face, and he's finally made friends which is a first for him. He talks about them all the time. I thank everyone at the school for this. We have our happy little boy back again.'

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead from the front and know what the school needs to do next to become even more effective. Self-evaluation is effective and thorough. The school links exceptionally well with other schools, agencies and work experience providers to meet the needs of the pupils. The upshot is that the school provides well for the pupils and gets good, and in some areas outstanding, results.

The pupils' learning difficulties mean that standards are exceptionally low throughout the school. Their achievement is good, however, and it is outstanding in sports and the performing arts. At each stage, from the Foundation Stage through to the end of Year 14, pupils make good progress in relation to their capabilities and starting points. The school is constantly looking for ways to further improve pupils' achievement. It has rightly identified that pupils with communication difficulties do not receive consistently strong support in lessons or in the environment. Displays and rooms, for example, have labels in words but not symbols.

The very sensitive care and support focused on individual needs mean that pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. All pupils love their school and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils form positive relationships and very close attachments to each other and with the staff who care for them. Pupils show a very good awareness of the needs of others, and contribute exceptionally well to the school and wider community. The school prepares pupils well for their future lives in the outside world, by helping them to develop good basic skills and through attending lessons in mainstream schools and through work experience. The staff's close teamwork and dedication to meeting pupils' needs lead to teaching and the curriculum being good. Effective teaching is the main reason why pupils' academic progress is good. The curriculum contributes a great deal to pupils' personal development as well as their academic achievement.

Care, guidance and support, when taken together, are good. A strong aspect is the finely tuned care provided for individuals with particular learning or medical needs. Effective support for pupils' personal welfare results in them feeling safe and secure at school. Academic guidance is not quite so strong, though still satisfactory. Staff occasionally miss opportunities to focus their assessment and teaching clearly on pupils' individual targets, and sometimes pupils are not given enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Post-16 students make good academic progress and their personal growth is outstanding because of their individually tailored programmes and the good care, guidance and support

they receive. Teaching is effective although opportunities are sometimes missed to reinforce important messages about how to make healthy lifestyle choices.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more consistent use of signing, symbols and electronic devices to ensure that all pupils, particularly those with communication difficulties, make consistently good progress in speaking and listening.
- Develop the use of individual targets, especially in helping pupils to take responsibility for their learning, where this is appropriate.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are exceptionally low in comparison to the national average. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a strong start. They take significant steps forward in all areas. Pupils further up the school, including post-16 students, make good progress overall. No group of pupils underachieves. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in dance, drama, music and sports. This is because of skilful specialist teaching and the curriculum the school offers in those subjects. Although progress is good overall in communication, the school has correctly identified that some pupils do not move on as well as they could, because there is inconsistency among staff in the use of signing, symbols and electronic communication aids.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils of all ages are exceptionally mature, polite and friendly young people. They move very safely and considerately about the school and know how to follow safe routines, for example before crossing the road. Behaviour is of a consistently extremely high standard. Pupils are fully involved in lessons, eager to learn and pay especially good attention to their teachers. They are very kind and sensitive to the needs of others, especially when they come across those who are younger or more vulnerable than themselves. Pupils love coming to school and attendance is good. Parents tell of how their children 'gallop out of the house to get on the school bus'. Pupils have a generally good knowledge of how to look after themselves, such as by keeping fit and eating healthily, although staff occasionally miss opportunities for the pupils to gain a greater understanding of a healthy diet. Pupils do a tremendous amount in the local community, especially by performing in shows or artistic and sporting events. A team of pupils from the school was recently very successful in a debating contest with local mainstream schools. Staff in mainstream schools and in work experience placements speak highly of the contributions and maturity of the youngsters who attend. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community by conscientiously carrying out responsibilities in their classrooms and in the school, for example as members of the school council. Pupils' outstanding social, moral and spiritual development is manifested in the way they conduct themselves, and in the outstanding progress they make in their creative development. Pupils learn about how people in other countries live and are introduced to world faiths. They develop a very good awareness of the wide range of backgrounds and cultural traditions of people living in Britain today.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Good teaching is the main reason why pupils of all ages make good progress. All staff work together well as a team. Teaching assistants give friendly and sensitive support to pupils in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining and also of their attitudes and behaviour. As a consequence, lessons are conducted in a peaceful and industrious atmosphere and learning moves on at a good pace. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, and generally give clear instructions and explanations. However, staff do not always make good use of signs and symbols to make their meaning clear, and the support given to pupils with communication difficulties is not yet consistently good. The school has recognised this in its training plan for next year.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum helps pupils to make good progress academically and also contributes much to their personal development. Good attention is given to each area of learning in the Foundation Stage, and to developing the skills pupils will need for living as independently as possible after they leave school. In the main school and post 16, particularly good attention is given to building up pupils' creative and physical skills and to achieving public success in these areas, for example through inter-schools sports competitions and the 'Rock Challenge'. This improves their self-esteem as well as promoting their spiritual and cultural development. Those pupils who can benefit are given good opportunities to attend lessons with children of the same age in mainstream schools, and about half the pupils do this. Visits, visitors and residential weeks enrich lessons well. These opportunities add much to pupils' enjoyment of school. The wide age range in the school and the relatively small number of classes mean that often pupils from different key stages are taught together. Most of the time the activities are well matched to the needs of all the pupils; just occasionally, however, in whole-class sessions, teaching is pitched at the same level for all pupils and is not finely enough tuned to their differing needs, especially to those of higher ability.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils feel safe at school and are able to confide in adults if they feel upset or worried because the school pays very effective attention to their personal welfare. A particularly good feature is the care for individual pupils who require medical or intimate care. Sensitive support is also provided for pupils with more complex difficulties such as autism. The parent of one pupil wrote, 'As our son approaches his final year at school, I feel he has had a wonderful life there. We as a family have been extremely well supported and listened to, through a few very difficult times.' The school council gives pupils an effective voice in the school. Some aspects of academic guidance are good. Staff constantly give pupils good praise, encouragement and feedback on

how well they have done. However, there is some inconsistency in how well individual targets are used, both in lessons and to help pupils take responsibility for their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are dedicated and resolute leaders who 'run a tight and happy ship' as one parent put it. They provide a clear educational direction for the staff team so that pupils are given what they need in order to make good progress and achieve such outstanding personal development. The governors are supportive and skilful, and together with the senior staff they effectively evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses. Lessons are regularly observed and staff are given very accurate, detailed feedback. The school gathers very comprehensive information on pupils' progress although it does not analyse, summarise and present this information in a way that is easily accessible to staff, parents and governors. The school has made good progress since its last inspection. Strong teamwork, together with the headteacher's clear direction for improvement, gives the school good capacity to develop even further.

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
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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	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

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	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	2

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	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	2	2
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	2	2

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?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

4 July 2007

Dear Children, Pupils and Students

Inspection of Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School, Horsham, RH13 5NW

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school. The school council told us a lot about your views of life at school. We agree with you that your school is a good school. You are mature young people who are kind and caring towards each other. Your behaviour is excellent. We are very pleased that you enjoy school so much. We are impressed by your great achievements in dance and drama and we particularly enjoyed watching 'The Rock Challenge' which we had on in our room all through the inspection.

Whether you are just starting out in Palms Class or are near the end of your career in the Independence Unit, you are all making good progress with your school work. We have asked your school to make sure that you all do even better in speaking and listening. We have suggested that the adults sign to you and to each other as much as possible so that you know clearly what they are saying.

You make good progress because the teaching is good. You also have many interesting activities in addition to your lessons, such as visits, visitors and residential. The adults care about you and look after you well. We have asked the teachers to help you more in achieving your targets, and to include you more in deciding what the targets should be. This will help you become even more independent.

Thank you once again for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults to make your school even better.

Mick Megee Lead inspector