

# Dove House School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116626
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	301990
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacque Cook

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 category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Glenys Howard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Colin House
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Sutton Road Basingstoke RG21 5SU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 351555
<b>Fax number</b>	01256 329749

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Although sixteen pupils have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) as their main special need, a further 35 pupils also have ASD as an additional need. Forty pupils have specific learning difficulties (SpLD). There are nearly three times as many boys as girls and none are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Three pupils are looked after children. The school gained specialist school status in mathematics and computing in January 2007 commencing September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Dove House is an outstanding school where pupils thrive and make exceptionally good progress. They clearly thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Parents are very pleased about the changes in their children's lives since they joined the school. Several commented on how their children's self worth and independence have improved. Pupils are exceptionally well-behaved and are very keen to learn. Through the excellent life skills course, which combines a number of subjects, they learn how to look after themselves and keep safe. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. One pupil talked enthusiastically about visits to an elderly persons' home and the help he provided to an elderly lady. Robust safeguarding arrangements contribute to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. Form tutors play an important role in monitoring how well pupils are doing in their lessons. As a result, the progress and well-being of looked after children are tracked on a daily basis as well as through regular meetings. The reward system is very effective in encouraging pupils to work hard. Excellent careers education and guidance and work related activities contribute to the very good preparation for the world of work.

Although most pupils join the school with low standards, they make significant gains in their learning because the quality of the teaching is very high. It is especially notable that pupils with ASD make outstanding progress. Those who initially have the most difficulty in working with others gradually join with their peer group for their lessons. Pupils with SpLD improve their literacy skills considerably through the work of the pupil assessment and learning service (PALS) which has been recently established in the school.

The curriculum is outstanding. It is enriched with visits, many residential experiences and clubs and activities. There is a good range of accreditation which is being extended to provide more opportunities for the less able to gain further awards. At present, due to timetable constraints, most Year 11 pupils do not have lessons in life skills or personal social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. There is a very clear direction with a focus on 'making a difference' for the pupils. The well defined management roles enable the school to move forward. Strategies to develop the specialist school status are effective and there is already good progress towards the targets for the first year. A great deal has been done to improve pupils' achievement and well-being including the appointment of a home school liaison manager who provides an excellent link between the home and the school. Pupils' attendance is now outstanding with no unauthorised absence. The school has a wealth of data about pupils' progress which is monitored very well on an individual basis. However, the progress of groups of pupils is not analysed sufficiently. The governance of the school is excellent.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Use data more effectively by monitoring the progress of groups of pupils including those with ASD and SpLD.
- Ensure Year 11 pupils continue to study PSHE and citizenship.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils achieve exceptionally well. Most continue to have low standards but make excellent progress. A few achieve standards that are in line with their mainstream peers notably in subjects such as art and design. In several subjects more able pupils are achieving general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) grades. Pupils of lower ability generally make outstanding progress and gain a range of awards. However, there are a small number who are achieving less well in mathematics than in their other subjects. A more appropriate range of methods are being investigated to help these pupils improve their numeracy skills. Pupils with ASD do exceptionally well because staff have excellent skills in providing the right environment for effective learning. Excellent teaching from the ASD provision helps pupils to manage their autism effectively, opening the door to learning for them. Many pupils with SpLD make significant improvement in their reading and spelling skills which helps them to make excellent progress in their lessons. Pupils make very good progress towards achieving their targets.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are well mannered and considerate of others. They say they enjoy school which is confirmed by the low rate of absence and their very positive attitudes. One pupil commented 'working hard is good'. In lessons they are keen to take part and work extremely well together. For instance, two pupils helped each other quietly and sensibly to establish what workers were doing in contemporary pictures from in the middle ages. All pupils strive to stay healthy and keep safe. Members of the school council take their role very seriously. They have been instrumental in improving the school dinners so that they are healthier. Pupils with ASD use the fitness room, taking vigorous exercise as part of their healthy living programme. They work enthusiastically and safely even though they are in close proximity to each other.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their art work, for example, is heavily influenced by a range of cultures including African and native American. They find the exciting artefacts thought provoking. Pupils enjoy community service and fundraising activities. They have established a strong moral code and a clear understanding of right and wrong which underpins their attitude to life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of teaching and learning ranges from good to outstanding. Teachers have high levels of expertise and are very aware of the needs and abilities of the pupils in their classes. They plan lessons based on very effective assessments of pupils' progress. As a result, work is pitched at the right level. Often there are different activities or support is increased through effective use of classroom assistants. In an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson the teacher set some pupils working and then demonstrated the sequence of activities needed to create a power point slide to those who were still unsure. Staff develop pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively in all lessons. They question pupils skilfully, draw out technical language and elicit opinions. Pupils are genuinely interested in what they have to learn and are keen to take work home to do. Praise and encouragement are used very successfully

to build pupils' confidence and reinforce good behaviour. As a result, pupils are willing to tackle more challenging work. Lessons generally have a clear structure, routines are established and instructions clear so that pupils with ASD can learn successfully. The use of ICT is widespread. One pupil commented 'ICT is brilliant it helps you to learn'.

Very occasionally the wording of written tasks is too difficult for pupils to read without help. Pupils try to puzzle out what it is they have to do and often enlist the help of peers but this can slow their work as they wait for support from staff.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is very well suited to meet the needs of individual pupils. The range of award bearing courses is being broadened further with the introduction of a new accreditation specifically designed for lower ability pupils to complement other courses that are studied.

The emphasis on improving pupils' self esteem and providing skills that will be important when they leave school is paramount. This is most clearly seen in the outstanding life skills course which is, however, not currently available for all pupils in Year 11. This is because their timetables are very full of other subjects including many award bearing courses. Elements of PSHE, citizenship and food technology are brought together, often in a very practical way. The timetable is deliberately flexible so that different groups can attend sessions held away from school at the centre in Privet each Friday. Here, they have opportunities to put into practice what they have been taught. Team work is tested for example, as they select, purchase and prepare food for their meals together. There are also regular residential visits to Privet and to other venues. There is an excellent emphasis on ensuring pupils have a good understanding of how to safeguard themselves. This includes a very good programme about aspects such as drug and alcohol misuse. Safety is taught when pupils participate in activities such as rock climbing at activity centres and when they are learning to travel independently. Their horizons are broadened through going frequently to theatres and places of interest. One pupil excitedly related how he had stood where the prime minister stands in the Houses of Parliament. The Friday afternoon sport and leisure activities are enjoyed by pupils as are the after school clubs. Work related learning is a strength and includes studying vocational courses at college and work experience. Groups of pupils compete against each other to make the most profit from their enterprise schemes. They learn about successful marketing as well as effective production lines. The specific activities provided for pupils with ASD are very successful. Strategies to support their routines such as visual timetables, separate physical education sessions and brain gym are used outstandingly well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Arrangements to monitor the social and academic progress of each pupil are very thorough. The form tutor collates data from every lesson during the day and good use is made of tutor sessions. There has been a very successful focus on ensuring that the achievement of able pupils is high since the appointment of a teacher with responsibility for the more able. The school employs a speech and language therapist and occupational therapist so that pupils have the specialist support they need. Specific targets are set for this work and also for pupils with SpLD who are withdrawn to work with the PALS, so there is regular evaluation of how well they are doing. This supplements the 'access targets' written for every pupil which are reviewed half-termly. The reward system works extremely well and is consistently applied by staff. Pupils

value the star cards that are awarded and redouble their efforts to acquire golden tickets awarded for special events.

Home school liaison is very effective. The manager's role is far reaching and contributes strongly to the welfare of the pupils and, as a result, their academic success. Parents are visited at home. Their assessments of their children are collected and any concerns are followed up. Through involvement with transition planning and careers education and by organising work experience, the manager supports pupils to prepare comprehensively for their futures. The high quality of the links has led to no unauthorised absence this year. Induction procedures for pupils are very good and especially effective for those with ASD. A longer time frame and opportunities for pupils to familiarise themselves with parts of the building gradually helps to reduce anxiety.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Under the dynamic leadership of the headteacher, the provision for pupils continues to develop and staff constantly strive to improve pupils' progress. Management roles established over the last few years such as home school liaison, community and business, and able children have been highly successful. The development of PALS and the provision of therapy in-house have ensured that pupils' specific needs are met. Gaining specialist school status, developing the associated plans and the progress already made towards the targets demonstrate further that the school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve. Further accreditation, for example, has already been introduced for lower ability pupils.

The management of the ASD provision is outstanding and has broadened to support other pupils with ASD in the school successfully. The school's self evaluation is well done, but the judgements are modest. This is because further developments are identified. Monitoring procedures are good with some excellent features. Subject monitoring is particularly well developed and involves members of the governing body. However, the headteacher is the only member of staff to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. While this is supplemented by the work of others from outside the school, opportunities are missed to train and involve others. The analysis of data about pupils' progress is thorough and includes checking for differences between the progress of boys and girls and whether looked after children are doing as well as they should. However, it does not go far enough to include the progress of significant groups such as pupils with ASD and SpLD to help inform judgements about their provision. The governing body visit the school regularly and provide a high level of challenge to the headteacher and senior managers.

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## Annex A

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

4 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dove House School, Basingstoke, RG21 5SU

Thank you very much for the warm welcome I received when I visited your school recently. I was impressed by your good manners and excellent behaviour. I would like to especially thank those pupils and members of the school council who met with me and told me about your outstanding school.

This is what I liked about your school:

- you make exceptionally good progress and really enjoy your work
- your attendance is outstanding
- life skill lessons are extremely good and you like going to the centre at Privet
- you know how to keep yourself safe and be healthy
- your contribution to the community is excellent
- you are extremely well prepared for when you leave school
- the staff look after you exceptionally well and the teaching is outstanding
- you try hard and are proud to be awarded star cards
- reading and writing are improved very well through special lessons
- there are lots of visits and you meet interesting people
- your school is run exceptionally well, much has been done to improve it and more is planned
- the school governors are excellent.

This is what I have asked your school to do now:

- check on the progress of groups of pupils as well as individuals
- make sure all Year 11 pupils continue to be taught life skills.

With best wishes

Jacque Cook

Lead Inspector