

Frederick Holmes School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118139
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	312818
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Noreen Buckingham

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	85
6th form	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Hunter
Headteacher	Mr Dominic Boyes
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Inglemire Lane Hull HU6 8JJ
Telephone number	01482 804766
Fax number	01482 806967

Age group	2–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Students and pupils attending Frederick Holmes School present a changing and wide range of complex learning and physical needs. They are aged between 2 and 19 years and come from a number of nearby local authorities, as well as from Hull itself. Almost all use a wheelchair and a significant majority use Augmentative and Alternative Communication aids (AAC). There are 53 boys and 32 girls on roll; almost all are White British. All have a statement of special educational need and attainment on entry is well below what would be normally expected. The Headteacher manages the Education Service for Physical Disability (ESPD) jointly for four unitary local authorities and inclusion and outreach work are important features of the school. The school has the Primary and Secondary Basic Skills Charter Marks, the Healthy Heart Award, the Positive Health in School Award, the Gold School Toilet Award, the Activemark and Sportsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Frederick Holmes School is a good school with a number of outstanding features. The impact of the school's philosophy of 'expectation not limitation' is evident in everything the school does. Pupils thrive and develop into confident, mature young people. This is due to the good leadership and management of the headteacher and the senior management team and the positive relationships across the school. The school has improved well since the previous inspection and the wholehearted commitment and motivation of all managers and staff means that the capacity to improve further is good.

Pupils' achievement is good, particularly in their ability to communicate, since the majority of pupils use AAC. This good progress is mainly due to the good teaching, but also to the outstanding levels of support, care and guidance pupils are given. Children in the Foundation Stage start school with very low levels of communication skills, and limited personal and social skills, but they grow in confidence and develop extremely enthusiastic attitudes to learning. They make good all round progress. All pupils' progress is measured in very small steps, but by the time they leave most pupils have gained some externally accredited awards, although those with the most complex needs tend to remain at the lower levels. Older students gain awards at Entry Level in range of subjects, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards, a wide range of Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) units, many swimming certificates and Junior Sports Leadership. Students' and pupils' successes are a result of the consistently good teaching across the school. Class teams work well together and their knowledge of pupils is crucial to their learning. Assessment information is used to set targets, but is not always used consistently in planning for individual needs.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The pupils grow in confidence, express opinions and are willing to tackle everyday tasks with great enthusiasm, even though a high level of personal support is required. Their behaviour is exemplary and they work as hard as they can. Their attendance is good and there is usually a good reason for any absences, showing how much they enjoy school. This is a happy school and most pupils have a smile on their faces as they move around. They spontaneously communicate with visitors and comments such as, 'This school is brilliant, fantastic', 'It's the best school', and 'We like everything here' were often made by pupils. Good work and achievement is celebrated. The curriculum is good and the very wide range of enrichment activities significantly supports many subject areas, as well as pupils' cultural awareness. Links with local schools and colleges add to their overall experiences.

The headteacher's expertise, vision and commitment to the school result in good leadership and management. He is very ably supported by an experienced deputy and the whole of the senior management team, which bodes well for further improvement in the school. Self-evaluation is accurate. Currently, the school's work is monitored by the headteacher and deputy, who are supported in some aspects by the assistant headteachers. However, the contribution of other senior staff to the process is underdeveloped, which restricts their personal development and their capacity to have a detailed understanding of the strength and weaknesses of the school. The governors are fully supportive of everything the school does and work positively with the school team.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth-form provision, known as the college, is good and gives students a wide range of opportunities to develop the skills and confidence needed for when they leave. Much of their work is externally accredited, and links with local further education colleges and other adult facilities within the community mean their horizons are widened and their experiences extended. Developing independence for all aspects of life is strongly emphasised and students are encouraged to express their views and opinions, which are listened to and valued. The college is well led and managed and staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are included in all the projects they undertake, such as assessing the accessibility to some public buildings. Work-related learning and enterprise activities add to students' awareness and understanding of the world of work. Developing a business plan for finance produced lively discussion and a determination to succeed.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education. Children enter at the very earliest stages of learning, with limited social and physical development, and with very low levels of communication skills. Assessment of their needs is thorough and on-going. Good clear records are maintained of their progress and activities are carefully planned to promote learning in all areas. Children enthusiastically join in registration activities, enjoy all aspects of their learning and show a readiness to learn. The development of their communication skills, and learning overall, is emphasised using symbols, signs and switches. Some of the learning is impressive, such as when a young child successfully managed a range of head, hand and foot controlled switches to access the computer. Leadership and management are effective and all staff work very well as a team, supporting children in their learning. Very positive relationships mean that children are happy and secure.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve all members of the senior leadership team in monitoring teaching and learning more effectively.
- Ensure that assessment information is consistently used in lesson planning across the school to meet pupils' individual needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and they make good progress. The nature of their severe and complex difficulties means that standards are not comparable with national expectations. Progress is measured in very small steps using 'P' Levels and, because of the severity and complexity of their learning needs, some pupils remain at the low levels. However, from the Foundation Stage onwards some pupils make sufficient progress to enable them to transfer to mainstream schools. Pupils make particularly good progress in their ability to communicate their ideas, understanding and opinions. As a result, many older pupils and students achieve external accreditation in: Entry Level English, mathematics, geography, personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), literacy and numeracy; ASDAN Bronze Award, literacy,

numeracy and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE); numerous AQA awards; and Junior Sports Leadership. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This is due to the very high quality of care they receive and as a result of the curriculum, which is enriched by numerous activities and visitors. A very wide range of activities gives pupils glimpses into other cultures as well as their own. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils thoroughly enjoy all the varied experiences school offers. There are no issues of bullying or racism. All pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning and enjoy coming to school, as reflected in their good attendance. The school has a range of awards promoting healthy lifestyles, and pupils have many opportunities to participate in sporting activities. All students and pupils are very mindful of each other when moving around school in their electric wheelchairs and they are aware of the safety aspects of being moved themselves. Raising money for charities is a regular feature within school and the school council is involved in putting forward proposals for small, but important, changes in school routines. Although school council members are of secondary age, they feel a great responsibility towards ensuring that younger pupils also have a say, and regularly find out what they want. Older pupils and students are extremely well prepared for moving on to the next phase of their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good, which ensures pupils make good progress. Staff work well together and make sure all pupils are included in lesson activities. All pupils try their hardest in lessons and the very positive relationships between all staff and pupils mean that there is every opportunity for them to achieve and do well. Discussions play an important part in many lessons across the school, which promotes pupils' communication skills. Staff are patient and give pupils time to respond, encouraging them to persevere and voice their opinions. Assessment procedures have been refined and the information is used to set appropriate targets on pupils' individual learning plans. However, the link between assessment information and teachers' planning to meet individual needs is not always sufficiently clear. As a result, it is not always obvious how activities in lessons relate to pupils' individual learning plans.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good. It is very well enriched with an extensive range of activities, visits and visitors, which significantly broaden pupils' outlook and understanding of what happens beyond school. A lunchtime music club was particularly lively. Good attention is given to literacy, numeracy and personal, health and social education. These promote pupils' personal

development. The curriculum has been reviewed and improved since the last inspection and meets statutory requirements. However, planning for the few pupils with the most complex needs does not always make it clear enough that they are receiving a broad range of experiences. Particularly strong links with a local high school enable older pupils to enjoy science and design and technology in appropriate facilities. Good links with several colleges of further education and other work placements, along with enterprise activities, help prepare pupils extremely well for life after school. Some pupils are reintegrated into mainstream schools and their progress is followed up by the ESPD service located in school. Older pupils are out in the community involved in a range of activities which support their personal development and independence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are exemplary. Great attention is given to ensure that all their physical and learning needs are met. Pupils are included in their personal risk assessments and are encouraged to tell helpers the most comfortable and safe way they want to be moved, lifted and handled. They are treated with great dignity and respect and respond to adults and each other in the same way. Staff are excellent role models, and relationships across the school are very constructive, which all adds to the calm and very positive ethos. The school has established strong relationships with other agencies to help them support pupils who transfer to mainstream schools. All safeguarding procedures are in place and parents are overwhelmingly pleased about how all staff take care of their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The headteacher is committed to taking the school forward and has secured good improvement since the last inspection. He is very well supported by an experienced deputy headteacher and they work very well together, along with two assistant headteachers. All have clear responsibilities and, together with the bursar, share the same vision and commitment to give pupils the best possible education. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is always looking for ways to improve its provision. The headteacher and deputy headteacher largely have the responsibility of monitoring the work of the school, particularly teaching and learning. The assistant headteachers have a lesser role in this process, which affects their own professional development and also limits their capacity to gain a direct insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Staff are valued and teamwork is a strength of the school. Governors are fully supportive of the school; they frequently visit and also attend special events. They are kept well informed about the school by the headteacher, but make few focused visits to gain first-hand information about the effectiveness of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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	

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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?	2	2
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?	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	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Frederick Holmes School, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU6 8JJ

I enjoyed my two days with you this week. I think 'Freddies' is a good school with some aspects which are outstanding. I want to thank you for talking to me and looking after me at lunchtimes. Yours is such a happy school and I could see how much you enjoy all the activities which are organised for you. You get on well with each other and with staff and know that there is always someone who will listen to you. Your parents too are very happy about how you get on at school and think it's a good place for you to be.

Teaching is good and you are all extremely well cared for. I have suggested that staff make sure they always use the information they have about what you have learnt to check that what you are taught really meets each of your needs. Your behaviour is exemplary and you all work hard in lessons. This ensures you make good progress. You are offered very many exciting activities and many people visit your school to show you different things. Older students get out and about in the community in readiness for leaving.

All of this is because your school is well led and managed by your headteacher and senior staff. I have asked that all the senior staff are closely involved in looking at the work of your school to make sure that everything is in place.

I would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Noreen Buckingham

Lead inspector