

# East Hartford School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122388
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	314284
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alastair Younger

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>	5-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Eva Pattinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Hugh Steele
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	East Hartford Cramlington Northumberland NE23 3AR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 713881
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small school for pupils who have a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils have a statement of special educational need, most reflecting either moderate learning or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A few pupils have more severe difficulties, sensory impairment or autism. The school occasionally admits pupils under the age of five, but none was on roll at the time of the inspection and there are currently only two pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils can be admitted at any time of the year and many join in Years 5 and 6 when mainstream placements have become untenable. All pupils are White British. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. About 50% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Boys outnumber girls by about three to one. Pupils are drawn from the whole of Northumberland, many travelling long distances to school each day.

## 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 giving good value for money. Good leadership and management have resulted in the maintenance of a high standard of provision since the last inspection and stand the school in good stead for further improvement. Pupils achieve well and their personal development and well-being are good. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding. This includes extremely close working relationships with many other agencies and excellent involvement of parents in their children's education.

When younger pupils are first admitted, they are often at a very early stage of learning and development, well below that expected of pupils their age. Pupils transferring to the school at a later stage are often more able, but have usually been significantly underachieving in other settings, often for several years. This is usually because their behaviour has adversely affected their learning. Consistently good teaching, with good support from skilled classroom assistants, helps all pupils to make good progress and meet the vast majority of their individual learning and behaviour targets. By the time they leave, many pupils have progressed to the lower levels of the National Curriculum. The highest attaining ones occasionally reach Level 3. Progress is good in all subjects and particularly so in science.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because teachers make learning interesting and because the school is safe and usually very settled. The good curriculum is packed with exciting opportunities through which pupils learn and develop socially as well as academically. It serves most pupils' needs well, but slightly less so for the few youngest pupils. This is because activities are not always presented in a way that takes best advantage of how young or immature children learn and develop.

Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. The school has gained 'Healthy School' status. Pupils are active at playtimes, there is a good programme of physical activity and pupils recognise that some foods are better for them than others. The good progress pupils make in their learning and behaviour, coupled with their growing awareness of enterprise, contributes well to their future prospects.

The school has good procedures to evaluate the quality of its own work. This includes the assessment of pupils' progress which is thorough and accurate. This in turn contributes enormously to the setting of appropriate, ambitious individual targets for pupils as well as the excellent support and guidance offered to them. However, not enough use is made of the information to set targets for the whole school or to monitor the overall effectiveness of the school in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Use information on pupils' progress to set challenging targets for the whole school, and to help monitor effectiveness in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Review the curriculum for the few youngest pupils to ensure that learning activities fully match their needs and stage of development.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. The nature of their learning difficulties means they do not meet standards set for pupils in mainstream schools. Instead, their progress is measured against challenging

individual targets and they regularly meet these with a good degree of success because they are well taught.

Pupils joining the school are nearly always at a very early stage of learning. They make good progress and, by the time they leave, many of them demonstrate standards broadly similar to Key Stage 1 pupils in mainstream schools. This is a good achievement. The majority of pupils join the school at a later stage, often in Years 5 or 6. Most of these are, potentially, slightly higher attaining pupils, but in nearly all cases their education has suffered because of emotional or behavioural problems, often exacerbated by transfer from first to middle school. By being helped to overcome their difficulties, these pupils are able to make good progress and achieve well. It is not uncommon for some of them to be reaching a standard just below the average for mainstream pupils of their age by the time they leave. The evidence of the inspection points to achievement being good in all subjects, particularly in science. In English, pupils achieve well in improving their speaking, listening and reading skills, but many remain reluctant writers. In mathematics, the best progress is seen in pupils' good ability to use and apply their skills in real-life situations.

There is no evidence to suggest that any group of pupils achieves significantly differently from any other.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Because they enjoy school, and helped by the fact that all pupils are transported to school, attendance is good. There is very little unauthorised absence. Good supervision of pupils ensures that the school is a safe place with pupils contributing well by behaving sensibly and considerately most of the time. Pupils are well aware of the fact that if they are troubled by anyone or anything, staff will be quick to help them. Much is done to help pupils understand the importance of living healthy lives. They learn the importance of exercise and participate wholeheartedly in energetic activities, as exemplified by the young lady who managed over 50 skips at break time – well done! Pupils' contribution to the community is good. They are encouraged to express their views of what they like and do not like about the school and when they do so they are listened to. Pupils also contribute well to communal activities, such as assemblies and performances for parents and local people at Christmas. By improving their behaviour and working hard to achieve their targets, pupils considerably enhance their future prospects.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching in a safe and happy environment results in pupils learning well and making good progress. Small class groups and good support from skilled classroom assistants contribute enormously to ensuring that each pupil gets the help and attention he or she needs. Teaching is characterised by confidence, good preparation and good classroom management. Teachers make lessons interesting and lively. This alone helps to ensure the engagement of pupils and minimises disruption; when individuals are particularly troubled, staff are skilled at managing misbehaviour. A good characteristic of teaching is the way it involves all pupils equally. Pupils who are shy are encouraged and enabled to contribute to discussions and more confident ones

are not allowed to dominate. Frequent checking of what pupils have learned and remembered ensures that learning tasks are nearly always well matched to individual ability. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said their work was 'quite hard'. A feature of the best teaching is the insistence that pupils record what they are learning as they go along. This involves pupils well and keeps them on task. Occasionally, teachers do not keep a close enough eye on the clock, with the result that their own contribution to lessons over-runs, leaving pupils with insufficient time to complete planned tasks.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It meets all requirements and is well enriched with a wide range of activities out of the classroom which help to promote learning and personal development. These include residential opportunities where pupils develop independence and teamwork skills. The time pupils spend in class is slightly shorter than average, but it is well used and compensated for by many activities which contribute significantly to the development of pupils' personal and social skills. There is a good focus on numeracy, literacy and personal, social and health education: ample time allocated to the many other subjects of the curriculum adds breadth and interest to learning. Most learners are well provided for by the National Curriculum, but there are a few pupils who, even though they are of school age, are at too early a stage of development and learning to benefit fully from it. For these pupils, the curriculum is not always presented in a way that takes best advantage of how young or immature children acquire skills and knowledge.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for, guided and supported. This gives parents enormous satisfaction. Parents are also extremely grateful for the support and guidance they themselves receive through an excellent and growing range of events arranged by a highly effective family support worker. This help makes a significant contribution to encouraging and enabling parents to contribute fully to the education and development of their children. Pupils are also extremely well supported by behaviour mentors. Their involvement often precedes admission and continues after leaving in order to facilitate smooth transition between schools. Procedures to ensure the safety and protection of pupils are thorough and care is taken to avoid unforeseen accidents by careful assessment of possible risks in all activities. Accurate assessment of pupils' progress ensures that any slowing of progress is quickly spotted and appropriate help provided. This often involves close and effective working with other agencies. The school is kept very clean and inviting.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Governance is satisfactory. Good leadership has resulted in the maintenance of a happy environment in which pupils and staff thrive, and in which parents have the utmost confidence. Responsibilities are well shared amongst staff who are eager to develop their skills in order to provide more and better opportunities for pupils. Within the small and tight-knit community of the school, the progress of each individual is carefully monitored and evaluated, but whole-school trends are only loosely monitored and evaluated.

For instance, there is no system to evaluate the relative progress made by different groups of pupils, nor trends in behaviour. This results in a situation where challenging targets are set for individual pupils, but not for the school as a whole. Good management ensures that finance is carefully managed and resources efficiently used. There is a minor inefficiency in some classrooms when the good skills of classroom assistants are not put to best use during introductions to lessons. The governing body has faced some upheaval over the past year. It has been expanded and there are now committees to oversee different aspects of the school. Governors recognise that they need more training to be fully effective, but are keen to increase their role. At present, they are very supportive but not sufficiently questioning.

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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>	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
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	3
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**

26 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of East Hartford School, Northumberland, NE23 3AR

I called in the other day to see how you were getting on. I spoke to a few of you and the rest of you might remember me visiting your classrooms. Thank you for making me welcome. It was good to see so many of you working hard and behaving so well during my visit.

I visit schools like yours every so often to look at everything that is going on. I found that you are helped to make good progress by teachers and classroom staff. They expect you to work hard and help you to do so. You play your part by doing your best, attending school whenever you can and behaving well most of the time. This all helps to make East Hartford a good, happy school. Nothing much happens in school that your parents don't get to know about. That is a good thing, especially as staff are keen to tell them about the good things that are going on.

I rarely leave a school without suggesting one or two things that I think might make it even better. Here, I have had two ideas. Firstly, the school could make better use of the information they have about how you are getting on to decide what to work on next to help you and the school to improve. Secondly, the school could look at the sorts of activities the youngest pupils are given to do to make sure they are really helping them to do their best.

I'd like to wish you all good luck for the future.

All the best

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector