

Hollywater School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131068
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	315705
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacque Cook

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	122
6th form	8
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr James Hobbs
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Livings
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mill Chase Road Borden GU35 0HA
Telephone number	01420 474 396
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Age group	2-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hollywater is a school for pupils with complex needs that include moderate and severe learning difficulties. A few pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. There are twice as many boys as girls. Four children are at the Foundation Stage. Seven children are looked after and very few are from minority ethnic groups. This is a new school that opened in September 2006 in purpose built premises following the closure of two other schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hollywater is already a good and effective school. The drive, enthusiasm and clear direction of the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have ensured that a great deal has been achieved since the school opened just over a year ago. Most importantly, a committed team of staff has been developed who have a clear focus on the achievement and well-being of the pupils. One result of this is the outstanding enjoyment pupils experience at Hollywater. They clearly appreciate the excellent facilities in the new building and grounds. Several commented that the all weather football pitch is 'brilliant' and the soft play, hydrotherapy pool and computer room were described as 'really good' and 'cool'.

Pupils join the school with low or very low levels of attainment but from this base they achieve well. However, overall standards by the time the students leave remain low when compared nationally. A close focus on tracking the progress of individuals ensures that no group, for instance those with autistic spectrum disorder or those who are looked after, does less well than its peers. There are strengths in the progress made in personal social and health education (PSHE). Many pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep safe and they know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Last year, however, some pupils made only satisfactory progress in different areas of English: in speaking at Key Stage 2, writing at Key Stage 3 and reading at Key Stage 4.

Teachers have broadened their skills well to meet the wide range of needs of the pupils. The good quality of teaching and learning helps pupils to develop positive attitudes to their work and to behave well. Further strategies are being developed to help pupils to have a meaningful say in how their school is run. Members of a relatively new school council asked searching questions of the candidates at the interviews for the recently appointed deputy headteacher. Links with parents have been strengthened through the work of the home school liaison officer. Activities at the parent-involvement group sessions are appreciated and the provision of an after school fun club has been successful. Pupils' care, guidance and welfare are good and a high priority for all staff. This contributes to pupils' good personal development.

The curriculum is good and contributes well to pupils' increasing economic well-being. Pupils are able to make good contributions to the community through activities such as running a re-cycling centre. At the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils gain at least one suitable award or examination grade. Last year, through very good links with a local secondary school, a few more able pupils gained GCSE grades in mathematics and science.

The work of the school is monitored well through a range of strategies that have ensured a largely accurate self-evaluation. Suitably challenging targets are set to raise standards, and the governing body is an effective critical friend.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Students make satisfactory progress in the further education provision, because the quality of teaching and learning and the leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the curriculum has good aspects including an emphasis on increasing independence and the Award Scheme and Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course, there is not yet adequate progression planned from one year to the next. There are also too many overlaps with the Key Stage 4 work. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties in the separate class

achieve well. They make good progress towards gaining awards in the Accreditation for Life and Living course. All students have good opportunities to learn about the world of work. The facilities in the further education provision are excellent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The achievement of children at the Foundation Stage is good. They are taught well and last year made particularly good progress in improving their communication skills. This is because there is a strong emphasis on teaching this area of learning throughout the curriculum. Children also learn to behave well and to work with and alongside their peers successfully. There are good opportunities for them to use the outdoors as part of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' progress in speaking at Key Stage 2, writing at Key Stage 3 and reading at Key Stage 4.
- Raise students' achievement in the further education provision by improving teaching and learning and aspects of the curriculum, and by monitoring the provision more closely.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Pupils make good progress towards meeting challenging targets on their individual education plans and towards group targets set in lessons. They do extremely well in PSHE because this subject is taught well throughout the school day as well as in separate lessons. Children in the Foundation Stage learn to use an appropriate range of strategies to make their needs and wants known very well. The school has identified areas of relative weakness in older pupils' progress in English in comparison with their other subjects. Careful analysis showed only satisfactory progress in different areas of English in Key Stages 2 to 4. This is now being tackled well through specific teaching. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 are successful in gaining appropriate awards including ASDAN and grades at entry level and GCSE examinations. Students in the further education provision make satisfactory progress towards further ASDAN awards. Those with more complex needs continue to improve their independence and communication skills well as part of their accredited course.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils are very proud of their new school and look after it well. They contribute to the school community effectively, taking turns to do jobs in their classes. Those that are more able often take the initiative and befriend others, chatting and playing games with them at break-times. Prefects are excellent role models for younger pupils. They have specific roles such as postman, bike monitor and junior link, which they carry out very well. Pupils make significant contributions to the wider community. They very much enjoyed the recent sponsored 'hush' that raised a very large sum of money for charity, and a recycling centre is well used. Behaviour around the school and in classrooms is good. Pupils are polite and greet each other as they arrive each morning. Their attendance is good. The amount of unauthorised absence is very low indeed as

they thoroughly enjoy attending school. One parent commented that in stark contrast to their previous mainstream school, their child wanted to attend, even when unwell.

Most pupils are very knowledgeable about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy physical activities and join in well. They eat what one described as 'good food' in school and many try to do so elsewhere. A few, however, confessed that they found it difficult to do at home. Pupils say they feel safe in school and learn how to look after themselves. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is good. Their understanding of different cultures is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The quality of teaching and learning ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. All staff have developed strong relationships with the pupils they teach and, as a result, pupils are keen to do their best. Good team work between staff in lessons ensures that all pupils work well because work is pitched at an appropriate level for different pupils. Lessons are made interesting and are often fun. One teacher, dressed as Cleopatra, led her pupil 'tourists' (all in suitable costume) round the school searching for Egyptian artefacts. They later sat spellbound watching images on an interactive board, listening attentively to the teacher and accurately identifying key elements of Egyptian life. Pupils work hard in response to praise and encouragement from staff. Occasionally, there is not enough pace in lessons and pupils' attention begins to wander. There are instances, particularly in the further education provision, where materials used are not age-appropriate, and this slows learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is planned well to ensure that the needs of all the pupils are met. The youngest pupils follow an appropriate curriculum based on areas of learning. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are provided with a clear structure to their day and modified specialist approaches to ensure that they learn effectively. Key Stage 4 pupils have good opportunities to develop their work-related learning through attending college for a day each week and participating in work experience. The two 'rotation' afternoons that involve students in Key Stage 4 and from the Post-16 group are less successful because too many subjects are included and there are no choices of what they study.

Good use is made of local facilities and regular visits are made into the community to broaden pupils' education successfully. There are often visitors into school. During the inspection, a group talked to Key Stage 3 pupils about Hinduism, and the library service and music service visited. Visits, visitors, regular sporting activities and an after school club enrich the curriculum well.

Effective links with local schools provide good opportunities for pupils to work with their peers. Several secondary aged and primary pupils joined classes in mainstream schools successfully. In addition, pupils and students from a range of schools and colleges spend time at Hollywater.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. One commented that 'Hollywater is a super school - it takes every child's individual needs into account'. This is largely because staff know and monitor pupils' needs well and are alert to any changes. The monitoring of academic progress is good although strategies to evaluate achievement are at an early stage but developing well with clear targets being set. Procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are rigorous. Arrangements for monitoring the progress of looked after children are good. Any concerns lead to swift and effective action. Work is underway to gain accreditation as a healthy school. There are good arrangements to help pupils with behavioural difficulties to conform. Where needed, behaviour plans are used successfully. A clear reward system, based on house points for good work and behaviour, is effective.

The role of the home-school liaison officer is developing well. Parents and school are able to work together to solve problems, often providing a consistency that quickly improves matters. Speakers on topics chosen by parents, such as autism and the family fund, are invited to monthly meetings. Links with the Connexions service are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The leadership of the school rightly invested time and effort in bringing together staff from the two closed schools. This has been effective in producing a coherent staff team with a single vision. As a result, the direction and focus of the school, including the post-16 provision, are shared and, where needed, practices have been developed and sharpened as a result of effective self-evaluation. The broad range of monitoring strategies used generally work well. Where weaknesses are identified, effective action is taken to make improvements. This means that the capacity of the school, including the post-16 provision, to improve is good. Programmes of training and mentoring staff, for example, have improved the quality of teaching and learning. Challenging targets for pupils' progress based on comparative data from within the local authority are established. However, the evaluation of the post-16 provision did not take into account sufficiently the need to ensure an overall separate and different approach to students' education.

The governing body is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors provide an appropriate level of challenge to the headteacher and leadership team, particularly to ensure that money is spent wisely.

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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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA
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	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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	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	1	
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	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
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	3
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	3
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	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

13 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hollywater School, Borden, GU35 0HA

Thank you very much for making my colleague and me so welcome when we visited recently. We would like particularly to thank the members of the school council that came and talked with us. They were very helpful.

This is what we liked about your school.

- It is a good school where you do well.
- You make particularly good progress in PSHE.
- Your enjoyment of school is outstanding.
- You are taught well by skilled teachers.
- Your headteacher, the staff and governors have worked hard to sort the new school out so it runs well.
- The new school building and grounds are excellent.
- You are given good opportunities to state your opinions.
- The school works well with your parents.
- The good curriculum leads to all pupils in Key Stage 4 gaining an award or examination grade.

This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Increase the progress you make in speaking at Key Stage 2, writing at Key Stage 3 and reading at Key Stage 4.
- Improve the teaching and learning and parts of the curriculum in further education.

With best wishes

Jacque Cook

Lead Inspector