

# Halesbury School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103881
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	323923
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Blackband

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	97
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pam Partridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Winstone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Feldon Lane Halesowen B62 9DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818630
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 818631

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<b>Age group</b>	4–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school provides for pupils with a range of learning difficulties. The majority of pupils have moderate learning difficulties (MLD) but an increasing number have additional complex learning needs such as autism or challenging behaviour. The majority of pupils are White British while a small number of pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are currently no pupils at the early stages of learning English. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class, although there are currently only a few children in this age group.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Halesbury is a good school. There has been consistent improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and in the systems for recording the pupils' progress. Most pupils achieve well in their studies and a few make excellent progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. Pupils then continue to make good progress throughout the school and develop very positive attitudes to learning as well as the confidence to tackle new work. They make outstanding progress in their personal development. This underpins their good achievement. Teachers manage the pupils' behaviour very well and the positive quality of relationships between staff and pupils is a significant strength of the school. The school has effectively developed its provision for pupils with autism and communication difficulties. These pupils also make good progress.

Teaching throughout the school is good. Lessons are interesting and well managed. The pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. Teachers make it clear to pupils when they have done well. This has a positive impact on their motivation and enthusiasm. The quality of the assessment of pupils' work, however, remains variable and lacks consistency. This means that pupils are not always clear about the progress they are making and what to do next to improve their work. The variability in the quality of assessment also means that teachers do not always closely match activities to the specific needs and abilities of individual pupils. Parents are happy that their children attend Halesbury, knowing that they will be well cared for and that the school has high expectations of their success. Many parents commented on the rapid improvements they had noticed in their children soon after they joined the school. Pupils feel secure and well supported. They learn very well how to remain healthy, to keep themselves safe and to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They value the school and enjoy their education. This is evident in the very good relationships found throughout the school and the good attendance of most pupils.

Curriculum provision is good. Teachers and leaders rigorously and continuously monitor schemes of work. There are good programmes to teach older pupils about the world of work and life after school. The pupils in Year 11 have greater opportunities to gain an appropriate range of qualifications than at the time of the previous inspection. There are productive links with local mainstream schools which offer specialist knowledge and expertise. These have played a part in helping the school achieve the Artsmark and Sportsmark awards. The pupils' learning is enriched by the many opportunities they have to interact with the community, such as in the school council visit to meet the Mayor in his chambers. Teachers make good use of national strategies to ensure rigour and progression in programmes for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

The headteacher's considerable expertise and experience have enabled her to lead confidently the improvements to the school's performance. She and the assistant headteacher, for example, have made substantial improvements to their procedures for recording, analysing and tracking the pupils' performance since the previous inspection. The senior team and governors have continued to develop effective procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's work.

As a result, they have developed clear plans for continuing school improvement that address the right issues. The school is well set to build on the good progress made since the last inspection and there is a good capacity to improve provision further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage follow the Early Years curriculum even though they are taught in a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. They make a good start to their learning. They quickly adapt to the routines and their teacher's expectations and make good progress in all areas of learning. Their personal development is outstanding and they make excellent progress in becoming as independent as possible.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that assessment is of consistently good quality and used to set clear targets for pupils to help them understand their progress and how to improve their work further.
- Ensure that learning activities in all curriculum areas take full account of pupils' individual learning needs.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well, particularly in developing the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy. Because of their learning difficulties, the standards attained by most pupils are far below those expected of pupils of similar ages in mainstream schools. However, the pupils, including those with a range of additional difficulties, make good progress throughout their school career because of the good teaching and support they receive, which helps them to overcome the barriers to their learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in all areas of their learning. Pupils in the primary department get off to a good start in learning basic skills and this continues into the secondary phase. By Year 10, pupils begin successfully to adapt these skills towards gaining external qualifications. In Year 11, the pupils reach their potential by gaining a range of nationally accredited qualifications and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network lifeskills awards. The older pupils make good progress in all aspects of work-related learning. Progress in some areas, however, is slower because teachers do not always use clear targets to adapt learning specifically enough for each pupil's ability and attainment.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils' excellent progress in personal development reflects the school's strong emphasis on moral and social values. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have many and varied opportunities to share in spiritual experiences such as in the regular celebration of religious festivals from a variety of faiths.

The pupils gain a very good understanding of social and moral values through discussion, assemblies to celebrate their work and in their frequent meetings with pupils from other schools.

Their cultural understanding is outstanding through their experiences of African and Asian dance, drama and music and in their support for aid efforts in third world countries. As a result, their understanding of community cohesion and diversity is excellent. The pupils develop an awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles through the many opportunities to take part in physical activity during the day. Pupils feel safe and confident and know what is expected from them within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. Their behaviour is very good.

Pupils told inspectors that they felt free from bullying or unpleasantness and that they really looked forward to coming to school. Their progress in basic skills and in the good range of opportunities which the oldest pupils have to learn about the world of work prepares them very well for when they leave school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, partly as a result of regular monitoring by senior staff. Teachers and their assistants work in effective teams and they know their pupils well. Staff are well trained and, collectively, the range of skills, expertise and knowledge cover the wide range of pupils' learning needs. Planning for lessons is good because teachers follow clear schemes of work. Lessons proceed at a good pace and teachers make good use of questions. Teachers and their staff, however, do not always effectively record the small steps in the progress of each individual pupil. Consequently, they are sometimes unable to create challenging learning targets that help promote good progress. This can slow down the pace of learning. Individual pupils receive a high level of support when necessary. As a result, pupils become much more confident in attempting new things and this has a positive impact on their achievement. Pupils with communication difficulties are able to take a full part in classroom activities because staff provide good visual clues. Pupils respond well in lessons because they like their teachers and the support staff. They understand and respect the clear routines, which maintain good classroom order and assist in keeping a strong focus on learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Rigorous monitoring by senior staff ensures it is broad and balanced and meets all National Curriculum requirements. There are effective programmes which ensure that pupils understand the value of living healthily. They learn how to give and earn respect and friendship and they learn how to keep themselves and others safe. These programmes underpin the school's curriculum. The school has good provision for teaching the basic skills. There are varied trips and visits so that pupils learn new things in different situations. Pupils benefit from the well-established links with local specialist high schools in such areas as sport and performing arts.

There are well-organised programmes to teach the oldest pupils about the world of work and to encourage them to gain a range of vocationally based experiences. These experiences help to encourage every pupil to take up further education or job-related training when they leave school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe and secure at school are rigorously applied and work very well; all statutory requirements are met. Pupils feel safe at school and see the staff as their friends. Generally, teachers are well aware of the progress pupils make, but they do not always record this information consistently. Consequently, assessment of pupils' progress is sometimes not used effectively enough to ensure that all lessons are planned to meet the individual learning needs of pupils. In a minority of lessons, this means that some pupils are

practising what they have already learned and others are finding their tasks too difficult. Staff deal well with the wide range of pupils' learning needs. The growing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are taught according to principles specifically designed to match with their complex needs. There are close links with a wide range of specialists within education, especially the educational psychologist. There are also close links with professionals outside education, including the school nurse and the speech, physio and occupational therapists. These professionals help to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of the cause or complexity of their learning needs, gain full access to all the school offers. Statutory requirements relating to statements of special educational needs are fully met.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is providing outstanding leadership and she is well supported by her leadership team. She has established clear and appropriate priorities for school development and there is good evidence of the impact of these initiatives. There are convincing signs that since the previous inspection, provision and performance have improved throughout the school. Senior staff are successfully sharpening and re-shaping aspects of the school's self-evaluation. For instance, the leaders have developed effective systems for analysing and tracking the pupils' academic progress. They are aware of the shortcomings in assessment and target setting and the consequent impact of these on the pupils' progress. The team has clearly identified the school's strengths in ensuring pupils have an excellent understanding of community cohesion. The revisions in curriculum planning have made sure that pupils gain understanding of the school's community, and the wider local and international communities. This has made an effective contribution to their personal and social development. Senior staff have received good quality support and challenge from the governing body. Governors know the school well and provide clear guidance and advice. The quality of professional training for staff is good and linked to the high quality of performance management of teachers. The good communication and a strong team spirit within the school enable staff to feel fully consulted, involved and valued.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<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>	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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
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**

7 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halesbury School, Halesowen, West Midlands, B62 9DR

Not long ago, we came to your school to see how you were getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make the school better. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom, at school council and in the dining room. We were only with you for one day but that was long enough for us to see that you enjoy school and that you work hard. You are developing more confidence in your own abilities and understand the importance of doing well at school and preparing yourselves as well as you can for your adult life. The school gives you a good education. There are some strengths and one or two areas to improve. These are the main strengths of the school:

- The teachers encourage you to work hard and so you make good progress in your work.
- You make excellent progress in learning to behave well and looking out for other people.
- You have a good range of activities, which teach you about the local and other communities.
- Lessons are interesting and you are well taught. This means that you enjoy learning and do your best.
- The older pupils amongst you have good opportunities to learn skills which will be useful when you leave school.
- All the adults at the school look after you well.

I think the school could improve, particularly in the following ways:

- All the little bits of progress you make in your work should be written down and in the same way. This information should be used to provide targets and guidance to help you with the next stages of your work, so you will know what to do to improve more quickly.
- All your learning activities should be planned so they help each of you to build on what you already know and understand.

You can help too, by making sure your behaviour is always very good and continuing to try hard in lessons. In this way, you will achieve more and more each day.

Yours faithfully

Mel Blackband

Lead inspector