

Dame Hannah Rogers School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113653
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325852
Inspection date	13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Sarah Mascall

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

Boarding provision	
Social care URN	
Social care inspector	David Kidner

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	30
Sixth form	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marcia Wolstencroft
Headteacher	Angela Murray
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
School address	Woodland Road Ivybridge PL21 9HQ
Telephone number	01752 892461
Fax number	01752 898101

Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector working alongside a social care inspector responsible for making judgements on the quality of the boarding provision.

Description of the school

Dame Hannah Rogers School is a non-maintained residential special school, which provides for students with severe physical difficulties. Over the last few years the special educational needs of students have become more complex. Students' learning needs include moderate, severe learning difficulties to profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many have cerebral palsy and complex, medical and therapeutic needs, sensory impairments and associated learning difficulties. There are a small number of students who are looked after by the local authority. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.

The school is registered for students between the ages of 5 to 19, although the majority are aged 11 to 19. The school has not had any students under the age of 7 for some time.

The school provides boarding and respite care, and at present there are 13 full-time boarders and 15 part-time or occasional boarders. There are three boarding houses that cater for students from the age of 10 to 19.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dame Hannah Rogers is a good school. It has several outstanding features, the most evident of which is the exceptionally high quality care and welfare that is provided for the students. This is greatly valued by parents. The school has ensured that there is very good multi-agency provision available to students at all times. As a result, students' medical, physical and health needs are very well met. The extremely strong working relationships between these professionals and the teaching staff is a credit to the school and ensures that all staff have a very good understanding of every aspect of each student's special needs. The many positive views of parents can be summarised by one who wrote, 'My child is happy and safe and has grown in confidence and independence. Dame Hannah's ethos and expertise have secured this development for her and she continues to learn.'

There is a very good focus on supporting students' communication needs. The very effective systems for assessment ensure that students are given as much support as possible to enable them to communicate. This important strength, together with the outstanding provision for care, guidance and support, enables students to make excellent progress in their personal development. They are encouraged at all levels to be independent and to make choices. The interaction between staff and students is of a very high quality and students are constantly consulted and kept informed of what is going on. Students comment on how much they like school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. They develop a very good understanding of staying healthy and are keen to be involved in all sorts of activities. Through the strong focus on encouraging independence skills and communication, students are extremely well prepared for life when they leave school.

Students make good progress in their learning and achieve well because teaching is good. The very strong teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants enables effective one-to-one work to take place in most lessons. Systems to involve students more in their learning and be clearer about how well they are doing are developing. For example, whilst good use is made of each student's education plan to support learning, these are being improved further so that they are more student friendly and easier for the students to understand. The good curriculum is well planned and supports teaching and learning well. It is continually being developed so that it is interesting and relevant and as practical as possible. Good attention is paid to engaging students in sensory activities and providing opportunities for students to develop the skills they need for everyday life.

Good leadership and management have enabled the school to adapt well to the changing needs of its students. There is a very good sense of teamwork within the school and senior managers carry out their roles and responsibilities well. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths. There is good knowledge of each student's individual progress, but this is not always effectively analysed to enable the school to recognise any patterns or evidence of underachievement of individuals or different groups. Although the school has set itself challenging targets, these are not always clear and measurable. This relative shortcoming sometimes makes it difficult for staff and governors to ensure that targets have been achieved successfully and are improving outcomes for students. The conspicuous strengths and success of the school's pastoral care, together with the commitment and dedication of staff and governors to provide the best for students and their high expectations for students, ensure that the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the post-16 provision are good. Students make good progress and achieve well because there is a very strong focus on preparing them for life when they leave school. The curriculum has been reviewed and adapted and is excellent in the range of opportunities and experiences it offers to students. Although fairly new, and not yet fully embedded, it is already beginning to have a very positive impact on students' achievements. There is a good range of accreditation available to students and opportunities to be involved in mini-enterprises. Plans are in place to extend opportunities further, for example in enabling students to grow their own plants and develop a better understanding of sustainable living. Teaching is good and learning support assistants are used well to support students. Activities and discussions are age appropriate and there is very good involvement of students in making decisions. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning and students develop a good understanding of using computers.

Students comment on how much they enjoy school and all the activities they can do. Excellent attention is paid to health and safety and all activities are monitored closely. The care, guidance and support of students are excellent and support their personal development extremely well. As a result, students develop into young adults who are confident and have a very good sense of self-worth.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The quality of boarding at Dame Hannah Rogers School is good. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff receive training in equality and diversity and there is a comprehensive policy and staff handbook to address this. The school ensures that placement plans clearly identify individual needs in relation to meeting complex, cultural and religious needs. Menus viewed demonstrate that foods from different countries are promoted..

Children live in a healthy environment that clearly identifies their individual health care needs that are imperative to their health and well-being. A nursing team oversees the complex health care needs of the children and young people and fully consults with parents, other health care professionals and staff from care and education. There is a comprehensive medicines policy and generally medicines are well managed. However, on a very small minority of records it was clear that not all medicines have been signed as being administered and some medicines within one small area of the provision are being handled and stored incorrectly. Children are provided with healthy and nutritious meals. Some children have specific needs in relation to their eating and drinking. These are managed very sensitively and are very well supported.

The welfare of the children is promoted and the school has detailed policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. Complaints are listened to and acted upon appropriately. Bullying is not an issue at the school and children are encouraged to develop appropriate behaviours. Staff receive training in behaviour management and good records are maintained in relation to the use of sanctions and physical intervention. The school provides physical safety and security. There is a comprehensive recruitment policy and all staff do not commence employment at the school until a satisfactory enhanced criminal records bureau check has been obtained. Generally good records are maintained. However, very minor shortfalls were noted in the school's own recording system to confirm that all references have been verified and where possible contact made with previous employers.

The school ensures that care staff from the residential provision actively support the educational progress of the children. Each child has an individual education plan. There is very good communication between care staff and education staff. The school is extremely committed in treating children and young people as individuals. The residential care team and therapy team, which include speech and language therapists, occupational therapist and physiotherapist, work very closely together to ensure individual needs are met and reviewed as and when needed. Children and young people are encouraged and supported in making decisions and choices and the school is very proactive in ensuring that the method by which young people wish to communicate is supported and promoted in all areas of the 24-hour curriculum.

Young people spoken with stated that they feel listened to and are able to identify staff that they would speak to if needed. Staff were observed to offer children and young people choices in all aspects of daily living using various methods of alternative communication. Each child and young person has a detailed care and support plan with a working document located in each living area that is overseen by the key worker. These are regularly reviewed and amended as and when needed. There is very good communication between the school and home. Parents spoken with stated that the communication and involvement with the school is excellent and they feel fully involved in the care and support of their child.

The accommodation is well designed and meets the statement of purpose. Appropriate aids and adaptations are available including overhead tracking, adaptations to bathing, showering and toilet facilities. Young people spoken with stated that they like their bedrooms. The Trust has a programme of refurbishment and there has been good progress on the refurbishment of the main school accommodation and some bedrooms now have en-suite facilities. Most areas are nicely presented and homely. However, the bungalow accommodation area does not appear as homely.

The school has a clear statement of purpose of the school's care principles and practice. Children and young people are supported by staff who are very aware of their needs and an emphasis is placed on providing continuity and consistency of care. Staffing levels are adequate and are constantly reviewed in order to meet the needs of the children. Staff receive regular supervision and appraisal and the school is committed to ensuring that it has a well-trained and qualified workforce. The school is efficiently run and the principal ensures that there is regular monitoring of the care that is provided at the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine systems for analysing the information concerning students' achievement, so that the school is able to identify any patterns or evidence of underachievement of individuals or different groups.
- Ensure that targets are clear and measurable, so that staff and governors can always be sure of the school's progress against them. National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care Seven recommendations were made at the last inspection. These have all been met.
- Ensure that all medicines are signed for as being administered and that all medicines are handled correctly (NMS14)
- Ensure that all recruitment records contain the required documentation as listed in (NMS27)
- Ensure that all areas of programme for the refurbishment of the main accommodation area continue and that the bungalow accommodation area is made more homely in appearance. (NMS24)

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From very low starting points, students make good progress in their learning and achieve well, regardless of their special educational needs. Progress is particularly good in literacy, where students make consistently good and occasionally outstanding progress. Students with more profound and complex difficulties make often good and, on occasions, outstanding progress. The progress for the more-able students is good overall. It is though, more variable, although it is never less than satisfactory. This inconsistency arises because, occasionally, more-able students are not always challenged in their learning. Students make generally good progress in the core subjects of mathematics, science and information and communication and technology. By the time they leave school, students have gained recognition of their hard work through a range of accreditation, including ASDAN (award scheme development and accreditation network) and ALL (Accreditation for Life and learning).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students arrive in school happy and cheerful and this continues throughout the day. Students comment on how much they like seeing their friends and teachers and a number of parents confirmed their children's keenness to attend. Students' huge enjoyment of all the different activities is reflected in the many photographs of happy and occupied students displayed around the school. Students clearly enjoy the close relationships with staff and say they feel safe in school. Behaviour in and around the school is exemplary and students often show concern for each other. For example, one acted as an advocate for her friend during a school council meeting and raised her friend's concerns about a personal matter.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Students enjoy the many opportunities to be involved in their own and the local community. They have links with schools abroad and are developing a very good understanding of life in a multicultural society. The school council has played an important part in bringing about changes in the school and students know their ideas are listened to and valued.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' knowledge of students' special educational needs is particularly strong and is used well to support students' learning. There are examples of good and very good practice throughout the school. For example, all teachers ensure students understand what they will be doing in lessons. There is also a consistent approach to the end of lessons when teachers check what students have achieved. Learning support assistants play a very important role within the classroom and their knowledge and understanding of the students contributes greatly to students' learning. They are used well by teachers and there is a good focus on one-to-one learning linked to each student's individual education plan. There are generally good methods for recording students' achievements. The pace of lessons is usually brisk though occasionally it slows when an activity requires students to wait whilst each takes a turn. The planning of lessons is very detailed, although opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge more-able students in developing their subject knowledge. There is a good focus on encouraging students'

communication skills and the use of students' communicators is good. Symbols are used well in most parts of the school to enable students to make choices and understand the events of the day. The use of signing is improving. Where it is used well, for example in reinforcing meaning, it is effective, but not all staff are confident signers and opportunities are missed to use signing to reinforce instructions and vocabulary.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is constantly being developed. Planning is thorough and ensures that all aspects of each student's needs are met. The use of themes, where a range of subjects are taught together, is having a positive impact and students clearly enjoy the opportunities this provides. This was very evident when, through the current 'Italy' theme, students gathered in the hall to taste Italian foods and learn about the Italian way of life. The large Roman centurion standing guard in the entrance hall provided a good reminder of the history of the country. The school recognises the need to ensure that students' skills are built upon in a consistent way. It is planning to carry out an audit across the school to ensure that there is good coverage of the National Curriculum. There is good practice in some classes in linking work to the National Curriculum programmes of study, but this is not yet consistent across the school.

The very close links between the care staff and teaching staff ensure that the curriculum is extended throughout the day and evening. This is a very strong feature of the school. The range of extra-curricular activities through the 'waking hour' curriculum is very good and much valued by students and parents alike.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The exceptionally well staffed health and medical team does much to ensure students are well looked after and cared for. Many parents commented on the improvements to their children's health since starting at Dame Hannah Rogers. The health and medical team is very much part of the whole school team and the very close working relationships between teaching staff, therapists and nurses ensure that everyone is very well informed about each student's needs. Procedures for risk assessments, child protection and all other aspects that ensure students' safety are robust and well monitored. Resources to support students' individual needs, particularly in promoting their communication skills, are excellent. The increasing focus on signed communication is having a positive impact on students' learning and training is ongoing to ensure all staff become competent signers.

There are good systems in place to assess students' learning, and individual education plans (IEPs) are reviewed regularly. The school has reviewed the structure of these so that they are now easier for the students to understand. Staff hold regular meetings with the students to talk about how well they are doing, and staff are involving them more in setting their own targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A strength of the school is the very good working relationships between all the different groups of professionals working with students, and much of this is due to the strong leadership of the

headteacher. She has empowered staff to take on responsibilities and, as a result, the school runs very smoothly. New initiatives to improve the monitoring systems within the school are being developed. This includes for example, an audit of how well communication is used across the school and better supervision and support for learning support assistants.

The school ensures that it involves staff, parents, students and governors in its self-evaluation process and has developed a clear picture of its strengths. However, whilst there has been some analysis of students' progress on an individual basis, this has not given senior managers a clear enough understanding of the progress of different groups within the school. As a result, this has led to over positive judgements about aspects of provision. The school sets itself challenging targets in relation to, for example, the percentage of students meeting goals set out in their IEPs. These targets are effective because they are clear and measurable. This approach is not always employed, however, when setting targets for improvements to provision, which means that staff and governors are not always able to judge their impact. Governors though are supportive and very much involved in the life of the school. They, together with the senior managers, have detailed plans for developing community cohesion and have established good links locally, nationally and globally.

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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?	1	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	2	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/or disabilities make progress	2	

¹Grade 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

How good are 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	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
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 learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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 eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Dame Hannah Rogers, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 9HQ

Thank you for making us so welcome and talking to us during the inspection. We especially enjoyed the discussions we had with you during our visit. Your school is doing a good job and you make good progress in your learning. Here are some of the most important parts of the inspection report that we thought you might like to know about.

- The boarding provision is good.
- You say how much you like school and enjoy all the different activities.
- The sixth form is good and there is an excellent range of choices of things to do.
- The therapists and medical and health staff look after you extremely well.
- Staff make sure you are very well cared for and kept safe.
- You enjoy keeping fit and said how nice the food was at lunchtimes.
- Lessons are interesting and you are well supported by all the staff.
- The headteacher, her staff and governors make sure that the school runs smoothly.

To improve further have asked the school to:

- look closely at the progress you are making to make sure you are all doing as well as you should
- make sure that the school sets itself clear and measurable targets so that the staff and governors know how well the school is doing.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and be more involved in setting your own targets.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Mascall and David Kidner Lead inspector and care inspector