

Kingswode Hoe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115453
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326199
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gwen Ilott
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Drake
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2005
School address	Sussex Road Colchester Essex CO3 3QJ
Telephone number	01206576408
Fax number	01206571477

Age group	5–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school provides for pupils who have statements of special educational need for their moderate and complex learning difficulties. A small number of older pupils have more severe learning difficulties and a few have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). The majority of pupils are of secondary age when they enter the school and currently there are only 23 pupils in the primary department. Levels of attainment on entry are generally well below national expectations because of pupils' learning difficulties. Pupils come from predominantly White British backgrounds. A higher than average proportion is eligible for free school meals. There are three times as many boys as girls. The school is part of the Community Learning Partnership (CLiP), comprising of four other special schools who provide an outreach support service to mainstream schools. The school has recently gained the Active Mark and Sports Mark in addition to the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school offers a good education for all of its pupils, and both their well-being and achievement are central to everything it does. As a result, pupils respond positively by showing excellent attitudes to their learning, making good academic progress and outstanding progress in their personal development. Leadership and management are good and are shared effectively across the school so that individual staff strengths are maximized. The headteacher successfully leads a senior management team that systematically and very effectively monitors, evaluates and supports the quality of provision. This results in improved consistency and good achievement. All staff are highly dedicated and very successfully promote high quality care and education. There has been good progress since the last inspection and the impact of school development and new initiatives are showing in pupils' improved achievement. The capacity to improve further is good. The very positive environment motivates pupils to try their very best. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'My daughter has grown in confidence and has achieved things that I thought she never would.'

Outstanding partnerships with support agencies, schools, colleges and the community ensure pupils' needs and well-being are very well met. Community cohesion is promoted very effectively, both within and outside the school, enabling pupils to appreciate their place in the local and worldwide community. Outreach support for pupils and staff in mainstream schools is very well received and appreciated. Standards vary widely, but overall are well below the national averages. Pupils are entering the school with an increasingly complex range of learning difficulties, but some are capable of achieving standards in line with their mainstream peers. Pupils are welcomed into school life and begin to make a marked improvement in their confidence, communication and social skills. Before leaving the school some pupils achieve a range of grades in GCSE examinations and others achieve entry level examinations and vocational courses. The high standards of artwork by some pupils are in line with those achieved by mainstream pupils.

The school is always looking to develop and offer accredited courses to meet the needs of its current pupils. They learn skills that help them prepare well for life after school. Given their starting points, and the nature of their learning difficulties, pupils' achievement and progress are good. For many, their achievement is outstanding in their personal development. This success gives them social confidence and enables them to make choices and develop their independent learning. Pupils have challenging targets, which most successfully achieve. Their good progress is undoubtedly due to excellent relationships, outstanding care and guidance, the relevant curriculum and the good teaching and excellent support they receive for their individual needs.

Procedures for tracking, recording and analysing pupils' progress have developed very effectively and clearly identify any underachievement in pupils' learning. Successful support strategies are ensuring that the great majority of pupils make good rates of progress. A very small number of more able pupils have been identified as requiring additional challenges and further opportunities for studying at higher levels. Some teachers use the information on pupils' progress better than others to plan and deliver appropriately challenging and individual activities. The school has identified a very small number of pupils who are not making all the progress they could. It is therefore continually adapting relevance and challenge in view of the more able pupils. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development very effectively. Community visits, work in mainstream schools, trips, extra-curricular activities and visiting specialists support

their learning very well. Vocational and enterprise skills are developed well and there are good opportunities for work-related learning.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have very positive attitudes towards each other, showing empathy and understanding for each other's differences. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say that lessons are their favourite aspect of the school. Governors are well informed and actively involved in monitoring, evaluation and in the strategic management of the school. There is excellent communication with parents who are very supportive of all the school does for their children and appreciate the support they also receive. A parent said, '...my son is so happy. Staff have made him feel so worthy and he knows his views actually count. As parents we get 100% support.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers use the information on pupils' progress in their planning to meet the needs of all individuals, particularly those who are more able.
- Ensure the curriculum is refined and adapted effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' progress is supported very effectively by their enthusiastic learning. They are particularly pleased with the progress they make in their reading. This is a whole-school emphasis, responding to previous analysis of some underachievement. One pupil said, 'My reading has got better, because I practise all the time and I take books home with me.' Pupils learn practical applications in mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT), and skills to support everyday living. They learn essential personal and social skills that fully support their development as citizens. A few pupils reintegrate into mainstream schools and most achieve well, before leaving school with a range of relevant qualifications, to continue their education in local colleges. The school is implementing opportunities that will support the more able pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have a clear understanding of all aspects of keeping healthy and eagerly engage in the wide range of sporting activities on offer. They fully appreciate the excellent school meals on offer each day. Their extremely positive attitudes are reflected in their good attendance, outstanding behaviour and in their enthusiasm for learning in all lessons. Pupils' relationships with staff and each other are outstanding with mutual respect shown at all times. They make an outstanding contribution to their community through a variety of fund-raising events, through the work of the school council, and by helping and supporting each other. They learn useful skills through engaging in enterprise projects, such as the 'Fair Trade' tuck shop. One pupil reflecting the views of many said, 'It's really good here. I have lots of friends and there is plenty to do.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know pupils thoroughly and help them learn well, so they make good progress in lessons. Not all teachers are consistent in using pupils' progress data to plan and personalise challenging activities that build on what they already know. Classroom practice is regularly monitored and effective support is given to improve individual expertise. Relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding and promote a very positive environment, which encourages pupils to do their best. A parent said, 'My son has come on in leaps and bounds since starting the school and I am very pleased with his progress which is due to the support of the staff.' There is an emphasis on working towards individual targets and helpful ongoing feedback. Support in lessons by teachers and effective teaching assistants reminds pupils how they can improve. Good use is made of interactive white boards to support pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum supports pupils' good academic and outstanding personal development effectively. There are excellent opportunities to enrich pupils' learning, through a wide range of school visits, after-school activities and through pupils attending mainstream schools where appropriate. These all promote pupils' enjoyment and achievement very well. The school ensures that planning is relevant to pupils' needs and skills are built up progressively from year to year. Curriculum leaders are keeping abreast of national developments to ensure the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are more able and have the potential to reach national standards, are met. Good and appropriate training opportunities enable staff to acquire and improve their knowledge and skills to meet pupils' needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Consistent and efficiently implemented procedures keep pupils safe and secure, while promoting their independence. This results in confident pupils with positive attitudes. Very effective planning and coordinated teamwork between all staff ensure pupils' personal needs are met very well. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and carefully monitored to ensure their well-being. Parents are consistent in their praise for the school and report that communication between home and school is excellent. A parent wrote, 'My daughter feels proud of her school and as a parent I feel there is excellent communication between school and home.' Another parent added, 'Any problems have been quickly dealt with and with complete satisfaction.' It is made clear to pupils in lessons how they may improve and they receive very effective guidance on future opportunities. The transition into the next stage of learning after school is planned and supported very carefully.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The conscientious headteacher and senior staff are leading the school effectively through a series of improvements. Priorities emanate clearly from very accurate monitoring and

self-evaluation. The improvement in pupils' reading is the result of efficient data analysis and the subsequent strategies implemented for support. A number of other initiatives, based upon rigorous monitoring, are improving provision but are yet to demonstrate their full impact on pupils' achievement. For example, further accredited courses are being considered to ensure the right level of challenge is given to more able pupils. All staff are dedicated to ensuring all pupils get the best out of their time at school. The impact of their work is seen clearly in the outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils and the good academic and outstanding personal progress they make. Clear expectations are made of staff, their hard work is appreciated, and morale is positive. Professional development and training are readily available for all staff, promoting personal advancement and helping to meet the changing needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants have a range of responsibilities and make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and well-being. The outreach support service is led and managed very effectively and as one local mainstream headteacher said, 'We are fortunate to have such specialised support so close by for the benefit of staff and pupils alike.'

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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 ¹ 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

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
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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**

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingswode Hoe School, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3QJ

Thank you for making our visit to your school such a pleasurable one. We enjoyed meeting you. A special thanks must go to those pupils on the school council who met us and told us all about the school. I must not forget those older pupils I met during lunchtime who were very mature and who had clear ideas about what they wanted to do when they left school. You are all excellent representatives of your school, being polite, very well behaved and friendly. You get on very well together and really enjoy coming to school. I agree with you and your parents that your school is good and helps you to do your very best. I think that you make good progress in your work and excellent progress in your personal development. All staff work really well together to make sure you get the extra help you may need. You too can help by keeping a close watch on your targets and working as hard as you can to achieve them. We particularly liked that:

- you learn to do things for yourselves and you consider the needs of others
- you thoroughly enjoy your lessons and work very hard to improve
- you know how to be healthy and safe
- you like to take responsibility and you support your community very effectively
- you really like the school trips, clubs and after-school activities
- you learn useful skills that will help you when you leave school
- the school works very effectively with other people to ensure that you receive the support you need
- the school is well led and managed and it has your very best interests at heart.

There are areas that the school can improve upon. They are:

- to use the information on your progress so that all lessons provide you with challenging activities that ensure you make the best possible progress
- to ensure the curriculum develops and adapts to meet your individual needs effectively and challenges you to achieve your very best.

It was a delight being in your school and we wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

M J Smith

Lead inspector