

Ganton Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134626
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	328938
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Farrow

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.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	133
Sixth form	51
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	4
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Roche
Headteacher	Mr Ian Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Springhead Lane Willerby Road Hull HU5 5YJ
Telephone number	01482 564646
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Age group	3–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Ganton School and Student Centre is a community special school for pupils with severe, profound or multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. Virtually all pupils come from homes where English is their first language. Four are looked after by the local authority. Since the last inspection in 2006, the school suffered a prolonged period of disruption following major flooding affecting large areas of Hull. Pupils were taught in dispersed temporary accommodation from June 2007 onwards and only returned to the main site in March 2008. The school is subject to reorganisation proposals with plans for a new school to be built on a campus site by September 2011. There are a small number of children in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage and each year the post-16 student centre admits a number of additional students from across the region. The school has gained a number of external awards including National Healthy Schools kite mark, Activemark, Sportsmark, International School award and Eco School (bronze and silver) awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ganton School and Student Centre is a good school. The school is well led and recent developments within the roles, responsibilities and composition of the school's leadership team have empowered and invigorated leadership and management at all levels. This has further strengthened whole school commitment to raising the achievement of all students whilst maintaining the school's historic and well established strength in providing good pastoral care. The governing body has been strengthened by the appointment of several new governors who bring with them a broad range of complementary experience. This has improved their capacity to provide effective and proportionate support and challenge that is helping drive forward the school's development. The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation has improved since the last inspection and is now being used effectively to identify and fine-tune appropriate priorities within school improvement planning.

Although the nature of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities means they cannot meet the standards expected of pupils in mainstream schools, pupils achieve well and grow in confidence and maturity throughout their time at the school. They say they enjoy school very much and are encouraged to explore and understand their own feelings as well as being sensitive to those of others. Care, guidance and support are good. They are characterised by excellent supportive relationships between all members of the school community and high aspirations for pupil outcomes. In this safe and nurturing environment pupils thrive and their personal development, as demonstrated by their considerate behaviour, positive attitudes and good attendance, is outstanding. Responses to a questionnaire sent to parents before the inspection confirm this view and reflect the fact that pupils admitted to the school settle quickly, look forward to each new day and show a desire to engage with the learning opportunities that are provided.

The school has systematically introduced, and then refined, good arrangements to monitor and evaluate its performance and the progress made by the pupils. This has led to steady and sustained improvements in teaching and learning, which are good, and which were maintained well during the time the pupils were displaced from their main school. The consistency of planning and organisation of lessons and the match of appropriately challenging work to individual's learning needs have also improved well since the last inspection. This is partly due to the development and use of increasingly sophisticated individual pupil targets which the school keeps under constant review to ensure they are sufficiently challenging to promote good progress. The curriculum is good but leaders and managers recognise the organisation and timing of the school day requires finer tuning to ensure all the available time is used as productively as possible.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Sixth form provision is good. Students make good progress academically from their individual starting points and their personal development is outstanding. These outcomes are the result of good teaching, excellent relationships and the provision of opportunities and activities that are well matched to individual needs. Students successfully develop basic academic skills alongside the skills they will need for leisure and life beyond school. Performance data is evaluated systematically and used with increasing effect to improve provision and learning outcomes. Student achievements are recognised through a suitable range of externally validated

and accredited courses and awards. However, as in the main school, the available time is not always used to best effect. Most students say they know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and are learning to make sensible choices about diet and exercise. More able students acquire a more sophisticated understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example, how to deal with the unwelcome attention of people who could take advantage of their vulnerability. Students respond well to good teaching in lessons that usually have a clear purpose; such as one during the inspection that was preparing them for an entry level mathematics award. The centre's leaders have a clear and confident vision of how to sustain and develop such established strengths and are doing this well. Provision is considerably enhanced by selective use of a flexible mix of college and workplace providers, in order to supplement the learning and development opportunities available within the cramped accommodation currently housing the post-16 students.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There are only four children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their provision is well led and managed and is enhanced by effective teamwork amongst enthusiastic staff, who work well with many other services to ensure the well-being of children. Consequently, children feel safe and settle in well when they join the school. They make good progress and achieve well because learning experiences and activities are enjoyable and well matched to their learning and developmental needs. Children quickly grow in confidence and clearly enjoy being members of a lively and vibrant class. A methodical approach to observation, assessment and planning contributes to good communication with parents. The development of a grassed outdoor play area has enhanced the provision of a play based curriculum and has led to an improved balance between teacher led and pupil initiated activities. Children's communication and language is developed well by staff who provide good role models for speaking and listening, enhanced by the effective use of signing or symbols as communication aids.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make best use of the time available during the school day to maximise pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The nature of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that they cannot approach standards set for pupils in mainstream schools. Typically they enter the school at the very earliest stages of learning and development. Some find it hard to move on from this position whilst higher attaining pupils often progress to Level 1 or 2 of the National Curriculum before they leave. Taking into account individual circumstances, this represents good achievement. Following their good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils settle quickly into well established learning routines and make good progress in Key Stage 1. This good progress is maintained throughout subsequent key stages and the sixth form. This is because of predominantly good teaching that is now guided by effective and sharply focused use of assessment and a whole school commitment to setting and securing ambitious individual targets which are met with a good degree of success. Good overall progress is evident for different groups of pupils regardless of the nature of their learning difficulty or starting points. This is because the school shows a deep commitment to equality of opportunity for learners regardless of their ability or preferred learning style.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Staff know and respect each pupil's individuality. They use this insight on a daily basis to ensure each pupil feels safe and valued and is encouraged to play a full part in the life and work of the school. As a result, pupils invariably enjoy coming to a school where they thrive, have fun and experience a tangible sense of achievement. Attendance is above average compared to similar schools and pupils' behaviour is excellent. This behaviour and the consideration they show for others demonstrate pupils' acute awareness of what they can do to keep themselves and other pupils safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop spiritual awareness of their world through everyday experiences and are helped to express feelings of both joy and sadness in the course of their time in school. Students show by their actions that they are exceptionally committed to helping others in their school and their local community. This was very evident for example during their experience of the upheaval caused by the flood. On a broader level, pupils make an equally strong contribution to the wider community; this has included raising funds to help disadvantaged children in Africa. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the need to eat a healthy diet and take regular exercise but mischievously admitted they do not always make the best choices. The vast majority of the school participates actively in a wide range of additional physical activities with pupils in other settings. As a result of their outstanding personal development, pupils can look forward to being valued and useful members of the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and has been achieved because the school has established robust systems to identify and tackle any weaknesses. Typically, teaching shares a number of common strengths including a relentless focus on developing pupils' language and communication skills, including the use of signing and symbols. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very effectively; delivering well planned and well structured lessons that are usually effectively matched to pupils' individual needs. Sometimes excellent teaching enables pupils to make significant breakthroughs in their learning. Occasionally, however, opportunities to promote more independence are missed when staff provide too much help with tasks pupils are capable of completing, albeit with mistakes. Excellent relationships exist across the school. Staff understand the needs of their pupils well. This lends an obvious confidence to their teaching that engages even reluctant learners well and encourages them to respond positively to appropriate learning challenges. As a consequence learners make good progress in most of their lessons and show positive enthusiastic attitudes to their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is engaging and varied and is well designed to meet the learning and developmental needs of pupils effectively. Consistent emphasis is placed on the development of communication, personal and social skills alongside basic academic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. A wide range of sporting and physical activities is provided in which the vast majority of pupils of all abilities enjoy participating. The link between schemes of work,

lesson plans and outcomes for individual students has developed well since the last inspection and has become a strength of which the subject leaders are rightly proud. The curriculum is suitably enhanced by many effective links with other educational settings, work place providers and through good links within the local community. However, there are occasions during the school day when the time available for teaching and learning is not used effectively. The school recognises this and plans to undertake a review of the school day to ensure the limited time available for learning is used as productively as possible.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Every effort is made to keep pupils safe, healthy and well protected. The school provides an extremely calm and supportive environment within which pupils, including many who are very vulnerable, thrive. This is due to the high level of commitment from staff to promote their enjoyment, achievement and welfare. The school works closely and effectively with parents and other agencies to ensure pupils' individual needs are well met. Accurate records of pupils' performance are kept and assessment data is used increasingly effectively to track their progress in relation to challenging but achievable individual targets. Consequently, in this secure and caring environment pupils are well guided to make good progress towards their individual targets. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare are robust and meet statutory requirements. Health and safety procedures are rigorous and well managed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. They are successfully focused on promoting the achievement of all pupils, while continuing to support and promote their impressive personal development. The headteacher, well supported by governors, has established a clear set of roles and responsibilities that have empowered staff at all levels to act in accord with this shared vision. Staff relish the recent opportunities provided to lead and develop their areas of responsibility and contribute to all aspects of the school's improvement. This has accelerated the development of effective and uncompromising approaches to self-evaluation, which in turn contributes to the school's good capacity to improve. The school is effectively promoting inclusive practices and developing community cohesion. Through its teaching and curriculum pupils learn to understand others from similar as well as diverse backgrounds and cultures, to value and respect their similarities and differences and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action. For example, by participating in the local area school parliament or building relationships with pupils from other cultures through the international school programme. Shared, high expectations of what can be achieved are helping to dismantle the few remaining barriers to securing consistently good learning outcomes. Governors are making a valuable contribution to the management of the school. Between them they have the experience and expertise to support, and when necessary, challenge the school and hold its leaders to account.

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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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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?	2	
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

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	2	
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	2	
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	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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**

5 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ganton Special School, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU5 5YJ

Thank you for making me feel welcome and for talking to me when I came to inspect your school. I enjoyed meeting you, watching you work and hearing about what you think of your school. I judged your school to be good because it helps you make good progress and to grow up into responsible and caring young people.

There are some things that are particularly good about the school and student centre. These are:

- the good quality individual help and support you are given that helps you improve your learning and independence
- good teaching that is helping you make good progress and which is preparing you well for life after school
- the excellent relationships you have with staff; you told me you like the way you can talk to them and the way they will listen to you
- you enjoy coming to the centre, attend regularly, work hard and try your best
- when you feel unhappy or do not behave as well as you should, staff and even other pupils help you to sort out your feelings as quickly as possible to get you back on the right track.

I have asked the school to improve the way in which the time available for teaching and learning is used to help you make even better progress.

I would like to wish you all the best in the future.

John Farrow

Lead inspector