

Queensmill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100378
Local Authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	335532
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Scott HMI

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	3–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Walsh
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Ragan
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including school policies, pupil tracking information and the 39 parental questionnaires received.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which the outreach provision contributes to the success of individuals
- how well the new secondary provision meets the needs of individuals
- how well the school prepares pupils who join early for return to mainstream education.

Information about the school

Queensmill is a small school providing opportunities specifically for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils all have statements of special educational needs and there is a large proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school has opened new provision for Key Stage 3 pupils in September 2009 and is expanding this year on year to cater for pupils up to the age of 19. Almost half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and boys outnumber girls significantly.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Queensmill school is an exceptionally successful school with pupils' needs central to decision-making. Pupils' progress is assured through committed and highly skilled staff, use of and involvement in the latest research in autism and an incredible passion for pupil learning.

The strong leadership in the school is well established and responsibilities are very effectively distributed at all levels. The value the school places on learning is clearly demonstrated not only through the outstanding progress of pupils, but also through the development of staff who engage in high-quality continuous professional development. This has resulted in a school that has an altruistic spirit of making a difference, an enjoyment and love of the work undertaken and staff that have clear career development. This complements the need to ensure pupils have a positive, engaging, caring learning environment and ensures that all in the school are valued, respected and challenged. With this, pupils' achievement is exceptionally high.

The teaching in the school is of particularly high quality. There are a high number of adults in classrooms to ensure all pupils are appropriately supported. The teaching assistants, teachers and other professionals all work together to ensure that pupils' academic and personal needs are met to a high standard. The skills, knowledge and understanding of adults ensure that pupils are challenged, stretched, and treated as individuals with great dignity. This is achieved successfully through the high level of understanding about autism and knowing each of the pupils in the class really well. Pupils reach a high level of independence relative to their own circumstances, behave very well and contribute to the school.

There is a successful and clear strategy to empower pupils and prepare them to contribute and to work as independently as their own circumstances will allow. Communication skills are developed through a variety of personalised strategies, and confidence is built. The engagement of pupils in music activities, for example, demonstrates how this confidence translates into wider participation. The school is highly successful at working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage setting. This early intervention is very successful in preparing many pupils for life in mainstream schools. Many pupils go on to mainstream schools and are very well supported by the outreach work of the school. Schools in the area value the training, insight and practical support that Queensmill gives to ensure an inclusive education and wider understanding of autism.

Queensmill is expanding the provision and now includes pupils in Year 7. This provision is much welcomed and is already successful in ensuring high levels of progress by pupils

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through high-quality teaching and a variety of learning opportunities in a safe and warm learning environment. This provision is expanding and clear plans are in place to ensure the high-quality experiences remain.

The school has systems for accurate tracking of pupils' progress and sets challenging targets clearly defining outstanding progress for individuals. The school is developing the assessment and monitoring systems in order to give even greater clarity and more immediate access to analysis. This is being led successfully and is already enabling staff to record a wider range of information.

Care, guidance and support in Queensmill are integral to all of its work. Pupils' needs are clearly understood and the partnerships between professionals provide for these needs very well. Professionals discuss and explore the different ways that conventions can be challenged to ensure pupils are central to professional practice. One parent explained the extent to which communication strategies were explored until a successful and highly individualised method was established. Other parents explained how the school helped them to understand and to develop a wider range of strategies to help their children's learning.

Queensmill school is not complacent with its high performance. It is proactive and analytical about all it does and all it can do. The focus on developing capacity in the local authority to ensure greater understanding of how to provide for autistic pupils is matched by work nationally and internationally.

The school's strong position in developing outcomes for autistic pupils, engagement with research, successful early intervention, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, expansion of the outreach programme and provision for secondary pupils demonstrates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. The school is clear about its strengths and is robust in its self-evaluation that supports the continuous development of the school

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the progress tracking system to allow greater depth to analysis of data and give wider whole school analysis.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils make excellent progress towards well-defined and challenging individual targets. Pupils are able to develop their communication skills as well as wider skills that contribute to living more independently. Pupils demonstrate trust and feeling of safety through their high level of engagement in the learning experiences and other activities. This is due to the security that the school provides, ensuring pupils are able to take risks in their learning.

Pupils make choices about keeping healthy; they enjoy cycling, which promotes greater independence, and are able to manage some of their own anxieties within the classroom.

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A significant proportion of the pupils in Queensmill school go on to further success in mainstream schools. This transition is very well led by Queensmill and the concerns of parents are recognised and supported. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage setting are particularly successful. It is recognised that this early intervention has improved outcomes for pupils.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The focus on individual pupils' success is a key element of the school's ethos. Staff at all levels are well prepared for supporting this success and the school is an extremely positive and vibrant place of learning. Staff embrace the opportunities that working with researchers brings and many are currently undertaking further studies and so understand the needs of the learner well.

Lessons are successful as teachers and teaching assistants work collaboratively with

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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other professionals to plan high-quality learning experiences. Planning is thorough and provides a highly personalised experience. The low-stimulus environment and calm, consistent manner of staff ensure pupils achieve a calm alert state to facilitate learning. Different adults lead separate aspects of lessons and this is very successful in enabling pupils to develop wider relationships and greater self-reliance. This also ensures that the strengths of all adults are utilised and teaching is vibrant and challenging throughout the day. In one lesson, pupils worked exceptionally well with the music teacher, alongside the class teacher, to increasingly contribute and demonstrate singing skills and work well with other classmates. Another lesson, led by a teaching assistant, demonstrated well the development of communication skills, challenging pupils patiently and ensuring all engaged in learning as they all received individual attention and a high level of challenge appropriate to their current level. The empathy and skill in pushing and rewarding pupils was common to all lessons observed.

Pupils' needs are met exceptionally well through a very well-planned personalised programme. This is flexible and responsive to the progress each pupil makes.

The care of pupils in Queensmill School is exceptional. The training of, and collaboration between, staff ensures pupils enjoy dignity and independence within individual limits. Effective communication between partners supports pupils' progress, regardless of challenges faced by individuals.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the school with a clear vision and has instilled a passion for teaching and learning that is infectious in the school. The leadership team is skilled and analytical about its own practice, and leadership is truly distributed with staff at all levels contributing well and valued in the school. The school has a clear direction and ambition in providing high-quality opportunities for pupils with autism. The success of the school so far has not diminished the drive for all leaders to improve things still further.

The school has been well supported by the local authority; partnerships with professionals are strong and enhance the provision and outcomes for pupils. The school has its own therapists and this has meant that the provision can be particularly well tailored and directed by the school.

The school is strong in promoting cohesion in the autistic community, with work in outreach locally, research nationally and internationally. The school also works hard to

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ensure wider understanding of autism. Opportunities to visit local cinemas, swimming pools and restaurants not only extend the understanding of autism in the wider community but also enable parents and carers to visit these attractions with greater confidence.

Governors are committed and provide challenge for the school. They ensure the school is providing high-quality experiences, questioning practice and seeking out expert confirmation of the school's position.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school provides high-quality experiences for all pupils from age 3 to 12. The Early Years Foundation Stage setting is no exception to this and is integral to the school. When children are allocated a place at the school, parents are very well supported and transition arrangements ensure children can quickly settle and start to make progress in the school.

The outstanding progress made by children is possible because of the high level of care, the clear understanding of autism and the ability to assess and provide for the individual needs of children. This high level of care and the rapid progress made by children enables many of them to go onto further success in the school or in mainstream education.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the experience pupils have at Queensmill school. The positive feeling about the school was expressed through many comments two of which typified the sentiments of many:

'All of the staff are eternally supportive and work very well with parents.'

'The wonderful thing about the school is that staff know my son as an individual' everything he does is tailored accordingly, just for him.'

Inspectors agreed wholeheartedly with these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Queensmill school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 54 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	74	9	23	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	69	11	28	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	69	9	23	3	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	64	11	28	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	30	77	8	21	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	67	11	28	0	0	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	62	13	33	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	64	10	26	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	79	7	18	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	62	12	31	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	67	12	31	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	33	85	5	13	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	79	6	15	0	0	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Queensmill School, Fulham SW6 3AA

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your outstanding school and for the help you gave us during the inspection.

You go to an excellent school with a wide range of opportunities and staff that care for you really well. Your teachers and all of the other adults work hard to prepare your lessons and make sure you are able to make outstanding progress. You make good use of the opportunities and with your hard work and cooperation contribute well to lessons. Staff really enjoy working at Queensmill School. We were very impressed with the skills, the knowledge and understanding that there is in the school about autism. These enable the school to identify clearly what you need and make sure you get this. It also means that they can set individual challenging targets for you. You reach these targets and develop skills that help you to be more independent.

Your teachers and support staff provide an outstanding curriculum and are eager to improve things further in lessons by developing even better assessment systems. We agree that this would make the school even better still.

I hope you will continue to work alongside teachers and other adults in the school to achieve even more.

I wish you well in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector

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