

Hallmoor School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103610
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336114
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Jones 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	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Marcus Brain
Headteacher	Mrs S Charvis
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Twenty lessons were observed taught by 18 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The work of the school was observed, school policies and the school improvement plan were looked at and questionnaires from pupils, staff and 36 parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- attendance levels for individual pupils and the incidence of exclusion
- the quality of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress
- the impact of the school's provision on the personal development and healthy lifestyles of pupils.

Information about the school

Hallmoor is an all-age school for children with an increasingly wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, most of whom have experienced difficulties in mainstream settings before admission. Nearly half of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of these speak a community language, other than English, as their home language. Girls are in the minority, with 75% boys on roll. A very large percentage of pupils travel in from deprived areas of the city, and over half the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, a high proportion. There are 12 looked after children on roll. The school is awaiting confirmation of its new designation as a Cognition and Learning Difficulties School as part of the city's special educational needs Strategy and a move to more suitable accommodation. The schools has gained the Healthy Schools award.

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?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Hallmoor is a good school with a happy, working atmosphere. Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well, developing communication skills and skills for independent living. However, attainment remains below the national average because of the nature of the learners' special educational needs and disabilities. The school's detailed and clear analysis of assessment data demonstrates good progress made across subjects by different groups of pupils. Older students are achieving well and nearly all gain entry level qualifications in a range of subjects. Most pupils say they feel safe and most attend school regularly, although a few pupils are persistently absent. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They know how to stay healthy and safe. Behaviour is good because of clear guidance from staff. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community. The school is a very caring and inclusive community where the consistent routines and high quality behaviour management strategies used reduce stress levels for pupils and enable them to concentrate on their work. The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding, and staff are committed and dedicated. Effective use is made of skilled teaching assistants to give individual attention where needed. The curriculum is relevant to the different learning needs of pupils, with sufficient emphasis on basic skills; literacy, numeracy and computer skills combined with a range of enrichment activities. However, learning opportunities are significantly reduced because of the poor nature of the school's accommodation. The school is on a split site and Key Stage 4 and the sixth form are located in a virtually derelict community centre. There are no specialist facilities for science, sport, music, technology or vocational courses and playground space is severely limited. Students in Key Stage 4 have less time in lessons compared with other schools and a few students in Year 11 do not have a full time-table.

The school is well led and managed. The leadership team have created a school with high expectations where all individuals are valued and encouraged to do their best. The role of the governing body is outstanding and governors are questioning and strategic in their approach. Safeguarding requirements, at the time of the inspection, were all met. Parents are kept well informed and are welcomed into the school. The school is pro-active in its links with local schools and the Education Action Zone (EAZ) and this has brought benefits and opportunities both for pupils and staff. The school knows its strengths and is accurate in its self-evaluation and what it needs to do to continue to improve. There is a cogent school improvement plan in place and the capacity for future improvement is good. The school's contribution to the life of the community is outstanding.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise rates of attendance by using enhanced monitoring and analysis to ensure successful interventions.
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring all pupils receive a full, taught time-table.
- Work urgently with the local authority to improve the quality of accommodation and facilities for all pupils at the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school uses a commercial database to record the small steps in progress pupils make. Recently, it has begun to use a national system to compare the progress of its pupils against other similar pupils. Both of these methods show that a large majority of pupils are making expected and above levels of progress from Year 1 to Year 9.

Pupils make good gains in literacy, numeracy and computer skills as they move through the school so that, by the time they leave, they nearly all gain externally accredited certificates of achievement in English, mathematics, science and art and a range of other pre-vocational areas

Progress is faster in mathematics and science than it is English so the school has developed a range of intervention strategies to help the pupils with their reading and writing.

There is very little difference in the achievement of boys and girls, looked after children or pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and their peers.

In lessons, different groups of pupils, including those with autism and severe learning difficulties, make equally good progress in learning. Pupils were seen focusing on their work, listening carefully, trying hard and taking a pride in the work they produced.

Most of the pupils spoken to said they feel safe in school and the pupils' questionnaires confirmed this. A few pupils were less positive but they all felt there was an adult they could talk to if they had a problem and they reported that bullying was dealt with effectively.

Pupils' behaviour is friendly and positive. They respond quickly and well on the few occasions when staff need to reprimand them and they show respect for each other.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the key factors affecting their health. They have a particularly good grasp of the concept of a healthy diet and the importance of exercise. Their ability to take regular exercise while in school is severely limited by the lack of suitable facilities and space, although the school does provide two hours physical education a week.

Pupils readily accept responsibility and are keen to participate in all the school's activities. They feel their views are listened to in the school council and they have tried their best to improve the playground. They involve themselves very well in the local area and, for example, run a project with the local allotment association.

Pupils develop basic skills and good personal qualities that support their transition to the

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next stage of life. Pupils are generally punctual but their attendance is average, even after taking into account those pupils who have medical conditions.

Pupils have a strong sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves and the world around them. They particularly enjoy physical and practical subjects. They produce high quality art work and love singing in the choir.

They mix well with others from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and they know the difference between right and wrong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils' needs very well and treat them with respect. Any incidents of poor behaviour are managed well with the minimum amount of disruption for other pupils. Teachers are greatly supported in their work by well trained and skilful teaching assistants. Lessons are well-planned with clear objectives for

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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learning and behaviour. In the three outstanding lessons seen, activities and tasks were very well-matched to the needs of individual pupils and imaginative approaches were used to motivate and engage pupils in their learning. Occasionally, pupils were not given sufficient encouragement to manage their own equipment and learn independently but relied too much on the teaching assistant.

Assessment is used constructively to help pupils improve their work. The system of termly monitoring sheets to track progress is working well to identify pupils in need of extra help.

The curriculum is a balance of strengths and weaknesses. It addresses the learning needs of most pupils and there is an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The well planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme promotes pupils' personal development effectively through, for example, teaching about sex and relationships, how to travel safely on the bus and the dangers of cigarette smoking. The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities including trips and residential visits which contribute well to their personal development.

However, the amount of taught time for older pupils is less than that usually found, and a few Year 11 students do not have full time-tables. The poor accommodation restricts opportunities for older students, there are few specialist rooms, for example there is no science laboratory, music room or gymnasium, and the limited outdoor play area restricts development opportunities for younger pupils. The staff have worked very hard to try to overcome these deficiencies.

The school provides high quality care, guidance, and support for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. Clear policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding and well-being of pupils. The school works closely and successfully with other specialist agencies to support pupils and their families. The school monitors the attendance of pupils and works well with parents and the education welfare officer. However, the school needs to ensure that it's planned detailed monitoring and analysis of absence rates and reasons for absence, identifies and delivers appropriate interventions which improve attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The monitoring of teaching and evaluation of the school's work are accurate and the

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head teacher and the leadership team have planned effectively what the school needs to do to improve further.

The governing body plays a strategic and challenging role, and support the school generously in terms of time and commitment. Governors are closely involved in the monitoring and implementation of the policies and procedures to ensure safeguarding and risk assessment.

The school provides good value for money by making the best of limited funding, and has gained the financial management award. However, deployment of staff in the sixth form does not always ensure that students are taught for most of the time by a teacher.

The school adopts good practice across all aspects of safeguarding and has effective procedures in place. Senior leaders work pro-actively to anticipate and deal with any situations which may arise.

Equal opportunities are promoted extremely well. The school has an excellent understanding of pupils' individual needs and analyses data to ensure all pupils achieve well. A formal assessment of the impact of the equality policy is carried out by the governing body ensuring it is upgraded to provide best practice.

The school has carried out an extensive community audit and, as a result, has an excellent understanding of all aspects of the local community. Through involvement with the EAZ the school has extended its work to provide breakfast clubs, play schemes, support for parents, and outreach work for other schools. The school identified a gap in its provision for the global dimension and has remedied this by forming links with charities, particularly in Pakistan. The school has been pro-active in following up cases involving very vulnerable pupils in challenging circumstances.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children arrive at the school with well below average starting points. They make good progress towards their early learning goals and in their personal development because learning is exciting and stimulating. They settle well at school as the result of the good links established with parents. Children are well supported and robust safeguarding procedures are in place. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and has ensured that the planning of activities is well focused on the needs of each individual child and that clear priorities have been set for improvement. The outdoor play area is poor and limits opportunities for learning and development but staff make the best possible use of the limited accommodation.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

Students make good progress in the sixth form and many achieve external accreditation in a range of examinations and grow in maturity and confidence. They are provided with excellent personal support and useful opportunities to sample different leisure facilities and visit local colleges. However, although they follow individualised timetables which suit their needs well, there is a lack of vocational and work-related options. Much of the teaching is done in very small groups by teaching assistants and does not encourage independent learning. Leadership of the sixth form is good. Staff successfully strive to overcome the negative impact of the poor quality accommodation. They have succeeded in creating a haven for students where self-esteem can be fostered, despite the surroundings.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

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Views of parents and carers

Most parents feel that their children enjoy school, make progress and are well looked after. Inspectors' observations support these views. As one parent writes, 'I am pleased with my daughter now she attends your school. Not just with her school work but with her confidence and attitude to life. It is all down to the staff at Hallmoor and all the hard work you put in.' A few parents express concern about various issues at the school but inspectors saw no evidence to support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hallmoor 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 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	61	11	31	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	67	10	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	58	14	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	42	16	44	3	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	50	15	42	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	58	12	33	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	42	16	44	3	8	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)	16	44	17	47	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	47	14	39	4	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	53	14	39	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	50	13	36	3	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	56	12	33	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	64	10	28	1	3	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



30 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hallmoor School, West Midlands, B33 9QY

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school on 28 and 29 April. We enjoyed talking with you. Hallmoor is a good school. We thought you would like to know what was good about your school.

You are very happy in school and really enjoy your lessons; you behave well, are polite and friendly and kind to others.

You are making good progress in improving your communication skills and developing self-confidence.

You work hard and make good progress in your schoolwork. Many of you do really well in your examinations.

You told us that you feel safe in school and are very well looked after; there is good care and support for all of you.

The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher and the governors, and works in an outstanding way with the community.

Teaching is good. You like and respect your teachers and teaching assistants.

You enjoy the range of sports, trips, residential visits and other activities provided for you in school and at lunchtime.

This is how we thought the school could get even better.

If all of you attended school every day without fail.

If older students had an earlier start to the day and more time spent in lessons learning.

If you had better buildings and facilities.

We wish all of you success in your studies and thank you once again for your help with this inspection.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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