

Penn Hall School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104417
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	336304
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Aldridge

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Dain
Headteacher	Alun Stoll
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2007
School address	Vicarage Road Penn Wolverhampton
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Age group	3–19
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
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Boarding provision	Penn Hall School Hostel
Social care Unique Reference Number	SC043187
Social care inspector	Carole Moore

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors and a social care inspector. Education inspectors spent just over 6 hours, looking at learning. Six observations were jointly conducted with a member of the school's senior management team. Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by a total of 12 teachers. An observation of learning during lunchtime feeding programmes was also carried out. Meetings were held with a range of staff and other professionals working in the school and the chair of governors. Informal discussions were held with learners, and telephone conversations were held with senior managers in two schools served by the outreach service. Stakeholder views were taken from an analysis of 57 parental questionnaires and 50 questionnaires completed by older students. An analysis of 60 staff questionnaires was also carried out. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including records, policies, evidence of self-evaluation and improvement plans.

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

- whether progress made by children in the EYFS and students in the sixth form differs from that made by others in the school
- the impact of specialist status on the provision and outcomes for students, particularly the use of technology
- the quality of self-evaluation in identifying precisely what needs to be done to improve provision and outcomes.

Information about the school

Penn Hall is a maintained residential special school that caters for 72 pupils with physical difficulties and associated increasingly complex needs that contribute to learning difficulties ranging from moderate to profound and multiple. All learners have statements of special educational need or are being assessed for one. The proportions eligible for free school meals or from minority ethnic groups are higher than usual. A high percentage has English as an additional language although none is at an early stage of learning the language. The boarding facility is used flexibly to provide for up to six students. They board between one and four nights each week. The school has specialist status for sensory and/or physical specialisms. It runs an outreach service for learners in mainstream schools. It has links with a range of special and mainstream schools, and is part of the 14-19 consortium in Wolverhampton. The headteacher is soon to retire and is currently in school for three days each week. On the remaining two days, the deputy acts as headteacher. The school's work has been recognised by several awards, including Investors in People, Sportsmark/Activemark, GO4IT, 21st Century Learning Alliance, Artsmark Gold, Eco Bronze, and CCE School of Creativity.

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

2

Main findings

Penn Hall is a school that is highly valued by its students, their parents, and others who benefit from its outreach service. It makes most effective use of the additional resources that have accompanied its specialist status as well as a wide range of other sources of funding that it accesses to support its ambitious developments. Its greatest resource, though, is the staff. They are very strongly committed to the school and work tirelessly and exceptionally well as a multi-disciplinary team to continuously improve the provision.

Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the provision is good. The school has correctly identified shortcomings in the provision for outdoor learning but does not have the capital funding to make the necessary adaptations to the premises.

Excellent partnerships are built with parents, external agencies and other providers, making a much wider range of learning experiences available than would otherwise be possible. Parents are fulsome in their praise, commenting on the 'huge advances over the years', their children's enormous enjoyment of school, and the 'wonderful, caring and professional staff'. Evaluations of the outreach service show exceptionally high levels of satisfaction. Schools point to the significant impact that the service has had on staff confidence and skills, and on the provision and outcomes for students with disabilities. The sports club that includes mainstream pupils who have very few other opportunities to take part in physical exercise is a particular hit. When asked how it could be improved, one student asked, 'Why improve perfection?' Sporting and adventurous activities are a very strong feature of the school and result in an exceptionally high uptake of extra-curricular activities and some considerable successes in competitions locally and nationally.

There are many opportunities for students to learn how to keep safe and to take risks in a supportive environment. The zip wire, which forms part of an adventure trail in the school's grounds, is a favourite. Older students regularly join able-bodied peers in the Kielder Challenge, tackling problem-solving tasks in a challenging outdoor environment. Students' safety has a very high profile at all times and there are excellent arrangements to keep them safe and encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles. They respond enthusiastically to all opportunities offered and contribute widely to the school and other communities.

Behaviour is outstanding and so are attitudes to learning. Students make good progress because the teaching is good. There are many strengths of teaching, including the warm, mutually respectful working relationships that adults forge with students.

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Assessment is used effectively to plan tasks that are well matched to individual needs. Although there is some high quality practice, not all teaching is equally effective in ensuring that students are clear about what they have achieved in lessons and what they need to do to improve.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly to the accommodation and curriculum. The school's self-evaluation is good. It is accurate and successful in identifying what is good and what needs to be further developed. It has a suitable means of evaluating progress made by those in Years 1 to 11 by comparing this with similar groups nationally. However, it does not have a way of evaluating the progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage or students in the sixth form. As a result of this, the school's capacity for further improvement is good rather than outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistent practice across the school so that all learners are aware of what they have achieved in lessons and what they need to do to improve further.
- Strengthen the school's capacity to improve by
 - developing a means of evaluating progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and students in the sixth form
 - liaising with the local authority to secure improvements to the outdoor learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Almost all students thoroughly enjoy all that the school has to offer. Most attend very well, although the overall figure is reduced by absences linked to medical conditions. Students make good progress because teaching is good and the school successfully intervenes to minimise the barriers to learning presented by students' considerable difficulties. All ages and groups of students achieve equally well. In lessons, they are well motivated and enjoy the activities provided. They try their best and persevere with tasks. Those who need adult support are not over-reliant on this because staff encourage independent learning. Students make the best use of their communication aids, for answering questions and making choices, for instance. They are accomplished users of new technology, to communicate, present written work or design mosaics in art, for example. They work conscientiously on tasks throughout lessons and make good use of opportunities to work independently, in pairs or in teams. There is rarely any off-task chatter as students remain well engaged throughout lessons. Where there are opportunities for them to evaluate their success in lessons, they are honest in their assessment. These opportunities are not always provided though, so occasionally students are unsure about what they need to do to improve. Older students assess their own progress through accredited courses and have a good idea of external requirements. They develop increasing independence in their learning as a result. They learn effectively about the options available when they leave school, and develop

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enterprise and independence skills, so they are well prepared for the future. All make a successful transition to a worthwhile placement once they leave the school.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They grow enormously in self-confidence and self-esteem, because there are always opportunities for individuals to shine and have their achievements recognised. There is no bullying or racism and students feel perfectly safe as a result. They benefit from the excellent range of opportunities to develop their social and personal skills, during the many and varied opportunities that they have to work and play alongside others. The high quality support provided to help non-verbal students communicate by others means underpins their social development. The school widens students' horizons by building in an excellent range of visits, locally, nationally and abroad. As a result, students learn effectively about their own cultural heritage and that of others. They show great respect for adults and for one another, and in their dealings with one another they show kindness and understanding. They are active in influencing school life through the school council. They fundraise, recycle, and represent the school in productions and sporting competitions. Each year, they rehearse and perform at the multi-faith celebration in the local civic hall.

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	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

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.

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	
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The school makes excellent use of new technologies to ensure that students are able to access a full range of learning activities. Most teachers are skilled users of interactive whiteboards and so students are confident in their use too. There is also effective use of other methods, such as signing, the use of symbols and text to support students' understanding, and real objects that assist students in learning facts or concepts. Staff feel very well supported in developing their skills, and the monitoring of teaching and learning is effective in identifying what teachers need to do to develop their skills further. Support staff are fully included in training and some have particular expertise, such as in visual impairment, which is utilised very well in lessons.

Students benefit greatly from the outstanding curriculum and care, guidance and support provided. The school is always looking for ways of improving its provision, and has led on some developments in the city as well as embracing national initiatives with enthusiasm. For instance, it has developed the curriculum for those in Years 1 to 9 by linking subjects together to make learning more enjoyable and meaningful. The school has also been proactive in ensuring that it is included in the 14-19 developments in Wolverhampton. Productive partnerships with others have widened opportunities for Penn Hall students and opened its facilities and expertise out to those with disabilities in mainstream schools. An ever increasing range of relevant accreditation ensures that older students' achievements have currency and these lead to further opportunities later. Curriculum enrichment is outstanding and students have an exceptional range of experiences that contribute most effectively to their personal development.

Opportunities during the school day are extended by experiences in residence, the Penn Pals after-school clubs, journeys abroad, and many visits to places of interest. Key Stage 3 students recently visited a museum to view the Staffordshire Hoard, for instance. The school also offers holiday time residential activities.

The multi-disciplinary teamwork in school underpins the excellent care provided. Medical needs are met very successfully so that parents have a very high degree of confidence that their children will be safe at school. Additional equipment to promote greater comfort and mobility is provided after careful assessment, and close attention is given to students' seating needs when they are in the classroom so that they are ready to learn. Transition arrangements are very effective; as a result, students are successful in their post-school placements. Effective links with other agencies ensure that students receive all the support that they need and the school can demonstrate through individual examples how successful interventions are in improving outcomes for particular students.

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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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a constant drive for improvement. Far reaching and detailed plans for development contain challenging targets, including those linked to specialist school status. Almost all targets are met within the timescale because the plans are carefully monitored and reviewed by governors and the senior team. Responsibilities are widely delegated and the task of securing and evaluating improvement is well distributed and conscientiously tackled by those with responsibilities. As a result, planning drives developments very effectively. Governors are leading on the recruitment of a new headteacher, and are fully involved in planning for future building work. They contribute to school evaluation, such as through visits to check directly on the work of the school, although their findings do not feed directly into improvement planning. Succession planning is good.

Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met, but arrangements go well beyond what is required. Staff training in child protection is excellent and procedures linked to health and safety, risk assessments and catering for complex medical needs are exceptionally good.

Equality of opportunity is at the heart of everything the school does. Where the school is able to compare outcomes for different groups, their performance is analysed to gauge whether there are any who fare less well than others. Staff are represented on, and some chair, citywide groups that secure additional resources for those with physical disabilities. No stone is left unturned in the quest for additional funds to meet needs by improving access in some way.

Through its outreach service, the school is successful in making it possible for learners with disabilities to remain in mainstream schools and to enjoy full access to the curriculum. Careful thought has been given to community cohesion and there is a clear action plan that forms part of the school improvement plan. The school is a harmonious community where diversity is recognised and celebrated. However, although the outreach service is thoroughly evaluated, some other aspects of community cohesion are not.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Penn Hall establishes good links with the parents of very young children before they start school, and provides good opportunities for them to support their child's learning in the 'school for parents'. Children who subsequently enter school get off to a good start, settling into their routines quickly because of the effective partnerships with parents and the high quality guidance and support for their personal and social development. They clearly feel safe and secure in this setting, and some benefit from spending some evenings in the hostel. Early intervention to ensure that children are quickly assessed and provided with suitable communication aids is a strong feature. This effectively supports children's communication and their personal and social development. There is a wide range of highly relevant and enjoyable learning experiences in a stimulating indoor environment. However, outdoor learning is limited by the position of the outdoor area in relation to the classrooms, preventing staff from giving children opportunities to choose simultaneously between activities indoors and out. Nonetheless, there are plenty of opportunities for children to access outdoor activities. As a result of the good teaching, and effective support from staff such as therapists, children make good progress. Tasks are well adapted to children's ages and abilities, because staff use assessment information effectively to plan learning experiences. The school correctly charts progress using the required profile, but staff have not yet devised a means of using the information from this to evaluate children's learning. Otherwise, evaluation is spot-on and identifies clearly what the setting needs to do to improve.

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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' enjoyment is evident in excellent retention rates, good attendance and wide participation in school activities. Sporting and adventurous activities are particularly popular. Leaders are ambitious, proactive and innovative, making determined efforts to ensure that students' individual preferences are met, particularly by exploiting all available partnership opportunities. Highly developed staff teamwork across the school means that there is a great degree of flexibility and personalisation of the curriculum, which is good. The school makes effective use of the city-wide aligned 14-19 timetable to meet students' individual needs, although this is at an early stage, and further additions are planned to the menu on offer. There is a good range of accredited courses that allow students of all abilities to have their academic and vocational learning recognised, as well as their acquisition of life-skills. Enrichment of the curriculum is outstanding and contributes exceptionally well to students' personal development. Teaching is good so students make good progress in lessons. They show increasing independence in their work, good motivation and application in lessons. However, there is some lack of consistency in ensuring that all students know what they have achieved in lessons and what needs further improvement. Students take increasing responsibility for themselves, such as in their personal care, and develop well their awareness of the community facilities, the world of work, adult life and opportunities beyond school. The vast majority go on to further education or social care provision, and feedback from colleges indicates that students from Penn Hall do very well. The school has yet to develop a means of evaluating the progress that students make, although evaluation of the provision is good.

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	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Boarding provision

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

The quality of the boarding provision is outstanding. The national minimum standards are met, with the overwhelming majority being exceeded. The two recommendations from the school's last welfare inspection have been met.

This resource is unique in that it provides a very flexible approach to residential provision and parents and children make their own choices when it comes to deciding if they want to stay over at the residential hostel. Decisions are also made on which children share the week together and these decisions are very much taken in consultation with the children. This service provision is viewed by the children as 'sleepovers'.

Pupils' overall health needs are managed exceptionally well by the on-site school nurses and there are good systems in place to ensure there is effective communication between the residential staff and the nursing team. There are clear policies and secure storage of medication. Parental wishes and consent are sought for staff to administer medication and first aid.

Healthy menus are generally appreciated by pupils. They are consistently provided with a well-balanced diet and choices mean that they are receiving the range of nutrients required for healthy growth and nutrition. Pupils learn about the principles of healthy eating as they enjoy an interesting and varied range of meals. Specific dietary needs are catered for including those related to culture, religion, food intolerance and pupils with allergies. The children treat mealtimes as enjoyable social occasions and accept good standards of behaviour as the norm.

Good safeguarding procedures exist throughout the school. All staff are briefed on how to report any concerns and staff have all received appropriate child protection training. The open culture encourages pupils to express their views and raise any issues. Health and safety issues are taken very seriously with robust policies and procedures in place. Designated staff are responsible for ensuring the safety of the site and all staff receive relevant training. Safety matters are reinforced with pupils through lessons, activities, fire drills, use of school transport and the school code of conduct.

The residential establishment is a remarkably well-managed provision which successfully contributes to the positive impact of the education, care and support pupils receive. The head of care provides accomplished day-to-day support to individual shifts.

Consequently, staff are well informed about daily routines, events and the progress of each pupil. It successfully provides a child-centred approach to all aspects of service delivery. Robust risk assessments are completed for manual handling and guidance is in place for staff to help ensure that this is done in a safe way.

Within the residential unit, prominence is given to promoting education in the broadest sense and all pupils are imaginatively engaged in a variety of activities that truly develops their learning. Staff celebrate pupils' educational and social achievements in the Friday school assemblies. These assemblies develop pupils' confidence which enhances their self-awareness and improves their self-esteem massively.

Staff rewardingly work in partnership with children and their families to ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account throughout the care planning process.

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This means that children are continually at the centre of their care plan. Pupils are robustly supported in their transition when leaving the school and moving on to other school settings. This demonstrates that pupils' welfare is a top priority.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference. As a result, pupils begin to truly appreciate the significance of differing values and are actively learning to have respect for each other. Children enjoy homely accommodation which is decorated, furnished and maintained to an appropriate standard, providing good facilities for their use. Children's privacy and confidentiality are deeply respected by all staff.

The commitment from all staff at all levels is a resounding strength of the school. Children are cared for by highly motivated, well trained and knowledgeable staff group who know them very well. They adapt daily routines and activities with great success to individualise care for differing groups and needs. As a result, pupils feel secure and are confident. One pupil commented that, 'I love sleeping at school because I meet my friends and have fun.'

The senior management team has a clear vision for the development of the residential provision and has identified areas to address to further enhance the accommodation. They effectively monitor the welfare of pupils. Representatives of the governing body regularly visit the residential unit recording the areas that they have looked at and producing well-written reports. This provides additional safeguarding mechanisms for the pupils by looking at staff and management practices.

Children enjoy being at Penn Hall School hostel and benefit from professional, effective and imaginative management. This coupled with a staff team who are skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic provides all children with stimulating and purposeful care.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

- All the National Minimum Standards are met.

This is the grade for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	1
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Views of parents and carers

In a relative high return of parental questionnaires, the vast majority were strongly positive. Inspectors agree with these parents, and acknowledge that many of the strengths that parents identify are particularly strong features of the school. A small number do not agree that the school helps them to support their child's learning. The school identified this as an area for development and has recently acquired the support of a home-school liaison officer who joined the well established team in school that supports learners who need assistance in order to communicate. This adds to already comprehensive opportunities that parents have to become involved, such as by

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identifying individual learning targets for their children, attending workshops to learn to sign, being fully involved in reviewing learners' progress, and receiving regular, full reports on their progress. Inspectors believe this criticism is being adequately addressed by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Penn Hall 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 inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	81	10	18	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	45	79	10	18	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	61	21	37	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	63	19	33	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	43	75	13	23	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	70	9	16	5	9	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	70	15	26	0	0	1	2
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)	38	67	17	30	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	75	13	23	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	68	16	28	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	67	16	28	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	44	77	11	19	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	77	11	19	0	0	1	2

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.



28 January 2010

Dear students

Inspection of Penn Hall School, Wolverhampton, WV4 5HP

Thank you for welcoming us to Penn Hall. We enjoyed our time in school, watching you learn and talking to some of you about your work. Thanks also to the many students who completed questionnaires, as these gave us a very clear idea of what you think of the school.

We came to see how well you are all getting on and what might be improved and were delighted to find that yours is an outstanding school. You and your parents speak very highly of what the school does for you. There was much praise for the staff, who work very well as a team to make sure that you all enjoy school and learn well. There are many things that are very good. The school works very closely and well with your parents and other partners to make sure that you have a huge range of enjoyable experiences as well as all the support that you need. It was pleasing to see how well everyone gets on together at Penn Hall. Every single one of you said that you feel safe at school, and your parents also wrote to say they are confident that you are cared for very well. You take part in a very wide range of different sports and adventurous activities, and all of this helps you to be healthy. Staff make sure that you are always safe. We found your behaviour to be excellent. You also contribute very well to the school and wider communities by taking on responsibilities, representing the school, and you seem to be rather good at winning competitions, in enterprise and sport. Because the teaching is good, you are all making good progress. When students leave they all go on to worthwhile places, such as colleges. Your staff also help those with disabilities in other schools, and their work is very much appreciated.

We have agreed a few things that need to improve. Teachers need to make sure that you are always clear about what you have achieved in a lesson and what you need to do to improve. The staff are going to find a way of measuring the progress made by the youngest and oldest students, so that they can compare this with students in similar schools. They are also going to work with the local authority to find a way of improving the outdoor area for the youngest children. We wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead inspector

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