

George Hastwell School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112467
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337939
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McKenzie

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Kitchin
Headteacher	Mr Bernard Gummett
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2007
School address	Moor Tarn Lane Walney Island Barrow-in-Furness LA14 3LW
Telephone number	01229 475253
Fax number	01229 471418
Email address	admin@ghastwell.cumbria.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited all class groups, observed 11 lessons and saw all the teachers in the school. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, senior staff and teachers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies, improvement plans and 28 responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire.

- how assessments are used to help set targets for pupils
- the impact of the curriculum on promoting basic skills and preparing pupils for the next stages of their lives
- the specific arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding and well-being of pupils.

Information about the school

George Hastwell School educates pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. Most have severe learning difficulties whilst others experience profound and multiple learning difficulties or conditions on the autistic disorder spectrum. Some have additional learning barriers and the majority experience significant communication impairments. Pupils enter school at any time in their academic career and many continue into the sixth form. A very few occasionally have dual registration with other schools. Around 20% are girls. Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage and around 53% are known to be eligible for free school meals; this is well above the national average. Since the last inspection, numbers in the Early Years Foundation Stage have reduced greatly. Trust status has been negotiated and is due to be established this term. The school is also seeking specialist school status for cognition and learning. It has achieved the Sportsmark and Activemark awards, gained the Cumbria Excellence in ICT Award and Healthy Schools status.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the safeguarding of pupils including reporting safeguarding concerns, record keeping and undertaking assessments of risk.

Although in many respects George Hastwell School provides well for its pupils, its failure to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures means that its overall effectiveness is inadequate. As a result of the shortcomings in safeguarding, governance and care guidance and support are also inadequate. However, the school works hard in partnership with others to ensure that in other ways pupils are supported appropriately.

Pupils enjoy lessons and contribute well. Behaviour is good and attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy forming positive relationships with each other and with adults. They report that they feel safe. The school places high priority on pupils being healthy, thus they undertake good levels of exercise and eat well. The large, vibrant sixth form is outstanding. It provides many opportunities for learning off-site and participating in holidays and visits. Throughout the school pupils learn about right and wrong. Most pupils accept others in the school community willingly and participate well in social events and activities.

Assessment of pupils' work indicate that all groups make good progress relative to their starting points when compared to others in similar schools. They develop skills in communication and independence that prepare them well for moving on to the next stages of their lives. Many, including sixth-form students, gain appropriate qualifications and some learn useful workplace skills. Teaching is good and is improving because of effective leadership. The work of classroom assistants is directed well by teachers. Assessment is good and most teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan individual tasks for pupils. However, the use of clear targets to help pupils to progress in lessons and through their support plans is inconsistent. Therefore, sometimes pupils are not always sure what is expected of them and it is not always possible to assess their progress. The curriculum is improving and is good, ensuring that all are given an equal chance to gain the most from their education, develop basic skills and have access to a wide range of opportunities. All statutory obligations, other than some relating to safeguarding, are met. The senior leadership team uses assessment data with increasing skill to ensure that no pupils are disadvantaged or discriminated against. George Hastwell School interacts well with many other communities. School leaders have greatly improved the use of resources. However, the accommodation used

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by the Early Years Foundation Stage does not always meet the requirements of the youngest children. The many changes implemented by the headteacher and senior leadership team since the last inspection have improved teaching and learning. Improvement planning undertaken as a result of accurate self-evaluation builds on these successful changes and provides evidence that there is adequate capacity to improve further. Swift and decisive actions undertaken by school leaders in response to the safeguarding concerns raised during the inspection further support this view.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Immediately take steps to ensure that safeguarding procedures are fully effective and meet all statutory requirements.
- By July 2011 enable pupils to make even better progress by setting more-focused individual targets in lessons and through support plans.
- By January 2011 ensure better opportunities for younger children by improving the accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

While nearly all outcomes for pupils are judged to be good, the extent to which pupils feel safe is satisfactory. This is supported by surveys undertaken by senior leaders and by pupils' own remarks to inspectors. The overall judgement for outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils is therefore satisfactory.

Given the nature of their special educational needs, it is not appropriate to make comparisons with published national data relating to pupils' attainment. However, pupils are keen to learn and make good progress over time. They settle quickly and engage willingly with their lessons. They share social experiences very effectively and enjoy working together; they also work independently and in small groups. Behaviour is good overall and is often exceptional. For example, pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors and keen to support each other in the dining room and during transport. Most make good gains in communication skills. All students in Year 11 and the sixth form are successful in gaining accreditations. Regular exercise is undertaken as part of the curriculum and enrichment activities such as cheerleading help pupils to enjoy physical activities. Pupils are keen to attempt ambitious physical events such as 'the big swim' across one of the Cumbria lakes, designed to help raise money for charity. Pupils are encouraged to eat the healthy school lunches and they respond well to this.

Pupils contribute very well to the life of the school through undertaking voluntary tasks in classrooms and around the school. The school council represents their views admirably. Recently, the council has been effective in helping to decide about play equipment and in organising fund-raising events. Delegates are proud to be members and are keen to point out the display board that shows details of the council and its work. Regular trips support the curriculum and older pupils take part in residential visits that support learning and interaction with other communities. Where they can, pupils undertake supported work experiences and this contributes to their good social and

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moral education. Older students regularly attend aspects of learning in other schools and colleges and this helps them to become familiar with others from different local backgrounds. Visits to cultural centres and places of worship familiarise them with people from a wider range of cultures and religions and pupils welcome people from different backgrounds into school for events in drama and music.

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	3
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mainly good. Teachers know pupils well and generally plan tasks to match their abilities. However, occasionally, some teachers do not challenge pupils as effectively as they should. As a result, the planned outcomes of lessons are not always well matched to the ability of individual pupils. Therefore, pupils sometimes make less progress than they could. The outstanding lessons observed made use of clear targets that were designed for each pupil and assessed during the lesson. Classroom assistants

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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generally guide pupils well and help them to engage in tasks. Pupils enjoy good relationships with adults and benefit in their learning from effective support in classrooms and through receiving individual help during lunch and break times. All pupils of statutory school age follow courses linked to the National Curriculum. The school has greatly improved the curriculum since the last inspection and recent exciting changes have taken account of national developments in both the primary and secondary programmes of study. For example, the school has piloted aspects of the new 14-19 curriculum such as Functional Skills. All students in Key Stage 4 and post-16 gain accreditations in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). School leaders have introduced a broad and balanced coverage of subjects in the lower part of the school that takes good account of pupils' communication needs. The emphasis, including for post-16 students, is on gaining good social skills and improving communication to aid further transitions beyond school. The development of basic skills is a high priority in all parts of the school. Pupils engage in activities throughout the day to revisit and reinforce aspects of personal, social and health education. Thus, they develop skills for living that help them to move on to the next stages of their lives. Students gain confidence from work-related learning, work experiences and outdoor activities. Religious and cultural celebrations are maintained and pupils are regularly introduced to music and drama from other countries. Further aspects of learning and social education are enhanced by the good programme of trips and residential visits. Many aspects of care, guidance and support are good. Staff work closely with each other and with professionals, including the on-site therapists. This helps to ensure that pupils spend as much time as possible in school and in lessons. Teachers and classroom assistants provide high quality assistance that ensures pupils are ready to begin learning at the start of the day. They also help prepare them well for the often lengthy transports to home. Staff help pupils to feel positive about their education when often that had not been the case when they attended other education provision. Pupils and their families receive valuable advice about transitional arrangements for moving on to the next stages of their lives. However, the overall quality of care guidance and support for pupils is inadequate because the effectiveness of key safeguarding arrangements is inadequate.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher and other senior leaders have greatly improved learning by raising the status of assessments and encouraging teachers to use them more effectively. They have instigated new curriculum pathways that take account of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, all pupils are included and have good and equal opportunities to learn and succeed. Senior leaders appraise the work of the school to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to progress and that none are discriminated against. However, the good teaching and assessment has not yet been made thoroughly consistent throughout the school and therefore the management of this remains satisfactory. Leaders have a clear vision for the school's future that includes formation of a trust and specialist school status. They have helped maintain high staff morale. The governing body is supportive and with a good mix of talents and a wide range of backgrounds it is becoming more confident about evaluating the effectiveness of the school. For example, governors have played an active role concerning the proposed trust status. However, governance is judged to be inadequate because it does not meet the statutory requirements relating to safeguarding. Procedures for ensuring safeguarding are inadequate. Although required policies are in place and many procedures undertaken appropriately, some aspects of reporting safeguarding issues to parents and carers and to the local authority have not been undertaken correctly. Designated safeguarding staff and governors have completed the required training and safeguarding work is administered by trained personnel. However, the keeping of records in the school relating to safeguarding does not meet requirements. Furthermore, inspectors found that the completion of risk assessment for off-site visits for younger pupils was inconsistent and did not fully ensure their safety. Similarly, risk assessments were lacking concerning certain personnel in the main part of the school. The governing body and leadership recognised these shortcomings and quickly took steps during the inspection to address them.

George Hastwell School places great importance on its contribution to the community. It reviews this work regularly in order to promote community cohesion. Consequently, pupils begin to understand as well as they are able about maintaining good relations with others, including people from different backgrounds and religions. Contacts are maintained with other organisations to help pupils know more about public services.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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 effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children are supported well. Generally, they arrive with little or no nursery experience but through regular attendance and participation children quickly develop early communication and social skills that are fundamental to their progress and future well being. Although children here are taught alongside older pupils in the primary phase, appropriate planning ensures satisfactory coverage of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The range of assessment strategies used by the teacher helps to ensure that support staff understand what children can do and what their capabilities are. Consequently, they make satisfactory progress. The classroom is not entirely appropriate for Early Years Foundation Stage children and the outside learning and play area of the facility is remote from the room. The coordinator for this area of the school has produced plans for the development of the accommodation. Leadership and management of the facility is satisfactory and improving.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Sixth form

The sixth form is a separate provision but contained within the main school site. Students and staff also have access to another building inside the school grounds that is utilised to help students learn about independent living. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding. Students report that they feel very safe in this well-structured environment and they are supported very well indeed. Most arrive from the lower school. Building on the good work of the lower school, students go on to develop the outstanding communication and social skills that are fundamental to their progress and future well-being. Excellent planning and attention to the details of individual needs

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ensures that the curriculum is appropriate for students, for example, by providing opportunities for off-site study. The students have a very wide range of ability and are at many different stages of development. The assessments used by the teachers help to ensure that staff challenge individual students and help them to develop their full potential. Consequently, all do very well in their classes and make very good progress over longer periods of time. All students leave with qualifications matched well to their levels of ability, a remarkable achievement for a provision of this nature. Leadership and management of the facility are outstanding and demonstrate further capacity to improve.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Twenty eight parents and carers returned questionnaires and some verbal feedback was also provided. The great majority of parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about the school and many took the trouble to write supportive statements. For example, one representative comment was 'This school is excellent! Staff provide excellent education and moral and emotional support to families, almost like a well-structured extended family. My granddaughter has exceeded all expectations'. The inspectors felt that this view represented much about the success of the school.

Parents and carers indicate in the questionnaires that the school keeps their child safe. However, a very few reported that incidents relating to safeguarding that had not been dealt with in the correct manner. This view is also supported by the findings of inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at George Hastwell 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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	75	7	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	57	9	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	75	7	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	79	6	21	0	0	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)	17	61	9	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	82	5	18	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	64	8	29	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	71	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	82	5	18	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	82	5	18	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils and Students

Inspection of George Hastwell School, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 3LW

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you on the playground, at lunch and in your classes. We were very impressed with the cheerleading!

As a result of the inspection, George Hastwell School has been issued with a notice to improve. This means that some changes have to be made to important safeguarding procedures and that inspectors will visit the school again in the near future to check on whether these changes have been made. In other respects George Hastwell School has some important strengths and the sixth form is outstanding. The teachers and classroom assistants look after you in lessons and around the school. You contribute well to the school community through your good behaviour and you try hard to adopt healthy lifestyles. Your attendance is good and many of you enjoy sharing your experiences with others. The teachers produce good lessons with many interesting things to do. The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors are working hard to make the school even more successful. You have many exciting opportunities arranged for you outside of school and you have access to good resources in lessons.

The inspectors judge that the school could be improved further, for example, by all teachers designing lesson targets for you so that you make even better progress. We would like there to be a more appropriate accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage children. Also, the school must quickly improve some of the things that it does to help keep you safe and protected.

We wish you all the best for the future and once again thank you for your help and interest in the inspection.

Yours sincerely,

Terry McKenzie

Lead Inspector

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