

Glyne Gap School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 114686 |
| Local Authority | East Sussex |
| Inspection number | 338423 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 January 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Anne Duffy HMI |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|---|
| 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 | 114 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 30 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sarah Whalley |
| Headteacher | John Hassell |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 December 2006 |
| School address | School Place Hastings Road Bexhill on Sea TN40 2PU |
| Telephone number | 01424 217720 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors spent the large majority of their time looking at learning; this included observing 15 lessons or parts of lessons and 14 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with staff, governors, including a parent governor, pupils from the school and students in the post-16 faculty. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation and policies, including the school's tracking of pupil progress, the school development plan and the recent audit of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. They also studied the 35 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by all children, pupils and students, as shown by tracking and analysis of data as well as observation
- the contribution made by curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to pupil outcomes, including laying the foundations for adult life
- the impact of the school's links with the community on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and the wider world
- the impact of specialist school status upon school improvement
- arrangements for safeguarding.

Information about the school

Glyne Gap is a special school for pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties. A small minority are on the autistic spectrum or have a physical disability. Around 90% of pupils are of White British background and there are approximately twice as many boys as girls. The school has three sites: the main site includes pupils from Year 1 to Year 11; children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Reception attend the Nursery, which shares provision on the site of a neighbouring primary school; post-sixteen students are based in a faculty at Bexhill College. The school is a specialist school for cognition and learning.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Glyne Gap School is an outstanding school which makes excellent provision in preparing its pupils for adult life. Teaching, support, guidance and care are all very strong and an individually tailored curriculum ensures that pupils are able to develop very well the confidence and skills that they will need in future.

Demonstrating very effective self-evaluation, the school's excellent capacity for sustained improvement is clear. It has not stood still since the last inspection and this is evident in many areas of its work. The excellent leadership shown by the headteacher is echoed across the whole team, including the governors. Learning is at the forefront of all initiatives and is supported by the school's view that 'everyone is a teacher'. All groups of pupils achieve very well, both academically and socially, regardless of ethnicity or gender, and despite the imbalance between numbers of boys and girls. This is shown by the detailed tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress against a range of personal goals and targets. For the large majority, progress, both in work and personal development, is outstanding. This is recognised by one parent who, echoing the views of many, said, 'the school has been instrumental in improving the life of my child and she has responded and progressed as a result.'

The school has gathered around it a number of strong partners who share its commitment to making quality provision. Its specialist status is used very effectively both to support school improvement and to extend skills and knowledge across the community. Outreach to other schools, nurseries and to parents ensures that its influence upon the community is strong. However, as yet, the strength of the links which have been established across all families is inconsistent. Much work has been done to promote community cohesion, but its success has not been comprehensively evaluated and links established further afield are not yet fully used to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school, including the governing body, raises the quality of its work in promoting community cohesion to match that of other areas by:
 - evaluating the impact of work done so far
 - ensuring that the few families who currently find it hard to take up existing opportunities are able to benefit fully from the school's work within the community
 - making full use of the links with schools in other countries so that pupils, as

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well as staff, have the opportunity to further extend their knowledge and views of the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Achievement overall is outstanding as pupils progress through the 'P levels' towards the early levels of the National Curriculum and, where appropriate, beyond. Each pupil's goals are known and worked towards by all involved. Progress is tracked in careful detail and challenge is in place for staff and pupils alike. Processes for assessment and monitoring of progress are finely tuned and ensure that both individual and group progress is analysed, gaps identified and effective action taken. As a result, there is no significant variation in the progress made by different groups, such as those on the autistic spectrum or who have physical disabilities. School-generated data indicate that pupils are on track to achieve challenging targets for 2010. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make excellent gains in their learning. At post-16, students achieve similarly well and gain a range of qualifications, including GCSE and vocational skills accredited by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. The notion of 'managed risk' is fundamental to the school's approach. As a result, pupils are well prepared to try new things and they show that they feel secure in a range of situations, from exploring what it feels like to touch ice to preparing to use the school's flat in the middle of town. Their attitude to learning is very positive and where pupils are absent, this is invariably for medical reasons.

Behaviour overall is outstanding. Pupils respond well to the school's approach and build up excellent relationships with staff. They know what is expected of them and are tolerant of each other. Early morning exercise sessions and breakfast clubs, together with carefully planned lunchtimes, support healthy lifestyles very well. Where appropriate, pupils make individual choices about what they will eat and inspectors found that they are not afraid to remind adults, too, to 'eat up your carrots!'

Pupils are included in many decisions and the views of current and ex-pupils inform the school's self-evaluation process. Candidates develop their own manifestos for election onto the school council and the post-16 students are represented on the student council of the college. Through opportunities such as these, pupils develop confidence and self-esteem. The strong spiritual element of this development is captured well in the school's phrase, 'the oneness of me', which is evident in pupils' social interactions. Pupils learn to consider others and to be aware of how they fit into their lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

There is much outstanding teaching, which reflects the school's focus upon learning as its priority area. Based on accurate assessment, lessons are well planned and the work is very well matched to the full range of needs and abilities. Staff use the phrase 'hands in the pocket teaching' which in practice means that pupils are encouraged to try for themselves. The most successful lessons across all departments involve challenge well balanced with praise so that pupils are encouraged to strive for success. Teaching assistants and other staff members form an important part of the teaching team and all are committed to promoting the pupils' independent learning and progress. Staff and pupils cope well with the relatively cramped premises of the main school; the learning environment in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and the post-16 provision is excellent.

The curriculum, which is personalised according to pupils' needs, interests and ambitions, is a strength of the school. It has had a very positive effect both upon the progress made by learners and on the high numbers who go on to further education, employment and training. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of enrichment activities which include residential trips and activity days to which brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents are also welcome. It very effectively helps lay the foundations for pupils' futures.

Very well organised arrangements for care and guidance support pupils' learning and contribute to their outstanding personal development. From the very early stages, each transition to the next phase of their learning is extremely well managed and students are very well prepared to leave the post-16 provision and move into adult life. Pupils'

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physical development, their communication and social skills are supported extremely effectively by individually planned programmes. Due to circumstances beyond the school's control, there was no input in the main school from a speech and language therapist at the time of the inspection. However, the members of the communication team in the school demonstrate a secure knowledge of the needs and goals of all the pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the school is characterised at all levels by a commitment to equality and diversity which ensures that each child fulfils his or her potential. Shared ambition and challenging targets underpin the pupils' outstanding progress. The headteacher provides committed leadership and has continued to move the school forward since the last very positive inspection. He has successfully created an environment in which all staff feel they can take responsibility and make a significant contribution to the continuing improvement of the school. The school has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for further development. It makes full use of monitoring and evaluation for all aspects of provision, including seeking the views of 14 different groups of stakeholders. These highly effective systems are instrumental in the school's outstanding promotion of equal opportunities.

Partnerships at all levels are very strong and have enabled the school to create excellent opportunities for inclusion, particularly in the Nursery and the post-16 faculty. The appointment of specialist teaching assistants and a portage worker ensures that partnership work begins in the very early stages of a child's development. The school works extremely effectively with parents; they are regularly invited to contribute their views on the progress made by their children as well as the effectiveness of the school as a whole. Contribution to community cohesion is good and embedded in much of the school's work. However, the impact of work done so far has not been evaluated recently in a way that ensures all aspects are comprehensively covered. As a result, the level of involvement of families within the community is slightly uneven, and the links which the school has with other countries are not fully used to promote and extend awareness of the wider world.

Arrangements for safeguarding are secure and implemented extremely diligently. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very effectively. As a result, it systematically

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holds the school accountable and is well placed to play a lead in the next steps of the school's development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Achievement is outstanding, with children reaching challenging targets and making outstanding progress in relation to their age and starting points. Routines are well established and this enhances children's feeling of safety in and around the Nursery which they share with children from the local community. As far as possible, children develop an awareness of healthy lifestyles because their physical needs are monitored closely, and they form excellent relationships with staff and with each other. There is a very good balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activity and staff regularly assess progress so that even very small steps are observed and recorded.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. There are many elements of outstanding provision, including the excellent resources provided within and outside this inclusive setting. There is excellent teamwork and all staff demonstrate a high level of skill and detailed knowledge about the children.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Sixth form

Achievement for students in the post-16 provision is outstanding. Staff support students extremely well so that they develop sensible attitudes and become increasingly mature in their work habits. The excellent development of the students' social skills is very evident in their behaviour around the college and in the local community. Teaching is outstanding and opportunities to involve students in assessing their own work are used very well. Good use is made of accredited courses to support and evidence students' achievements. Students gain awards through ASDAN and other bodies which provide well-matched programmes and qualifications to develop key skills and life skills.

Students undertake work experience of varying types and this helps to prepare them for the next stage of their education. Curriculum provision is very well planned and students enjoy opportunities to take part in everyday activities such as shopping and they enjoy creating their own newspaper. They are very well prepared and assisted in assessing their own risks when, for example, they decide they are ready to attend a nightclub for young people in the town. The excellent leadership and management of the post-16 provision fosters very positive relationships so that students gain in confidence and feel able to be assertive when making choices about their futures.

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

Questionnaires were returned from approximately a third of parents and carers. Their response reflects the views formed by inspectors. Almost all comments indicate the high level of satisfaction parents and carers feel about the school and the support it offers both them and their child, for example ' My son has progressed so much'all of his needs

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are met' and 'the school is everything we hoped it would be'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Glyne Gap 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 114 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 28 | 80 | 5 | 14 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 26 | 74 | 7 | 20 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 26 | 74 | 8 | 23 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 20 | 57 | 11 | 31 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 29 | 83 | 5 | 14 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 26 | 76 | 7 | 21 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 22 | 63 | 12 | 34 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 27 | 79 | 6 | 18 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 26 | 74 | 5 | 14 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 24 | 71 | 10 | 29 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 27 | 77 | 7 | 20 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 29 | 83 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 29 | 83 | 3 | 9 | 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 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.



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils and Students

Inspection of Glyne Gap School, Bexhill-on-Sea TN40 2PU

Thank you for helping us to learn about your school. We really enjoyed our visit. It was good to meet so many of you to see how well you are doing. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found.

We think your school is outstanding. You told and showed us that you enjoy school a great deal. You are safe and very well cared for. The Nursery and the faculty are exciting places for you to start and finish your schooling. We were pleased to see how well you were doing with your targets and how much progress you make by the time you are ready to leave. There are plenty of interesting things for you to do both in and out of school and it is good that so many of these include your brothers and sisters and the people who look after you at home.

Your headteacher leads the school very well and all the staff work hard to help you. Thank you to all your parents and carers who filled in one of our questionnaires. We agree with those who said that the school does a really good job but we have suggested that even more could be done to make sure that all families are included in the school's work as much as they can be. We also think that you would enjoy learning more about the lives and beliefs of young people in other countries.

I hope that you will all try your best and do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy HMI

Lead Inspector

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