

Inscape House School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134064
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	341428
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Claxton
Headteacher	Ms Liz Loftus
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2006
School address	Schools Hill Cheadle Cheshire SK8 1JE
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed nine teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with governors, staff, and the school council. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement, records related to safeguarding and the school's data on pupils' progress. The inspectors took into account 21 questionnaires from parents and carers. Inspectors also read questionnaire responses from staff and pupils.

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

- The learning of different groups of pupils, especially girls.
- The range of accreditations gained by pupils.
- Education about different cultures.

Information about the school

The school is part of a voluntary organisation called the Together Trust and provides for up to 60 pupils with complex autistic spectrum disorders and social communication difficulties. Some pupils are non-verbal and many present challenging behaviour. Each of the pupils has a statement of special educational needs. The school currently draws from nine local authorities, predominantly within Greater Manchester. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The vast majority of pupils are White British and a small number are looked after children. The great majority are boys. There are nine classes based in the school. A few pupils receive education which is based off site and a few pupils are provided with regular mainstream integration experiences. The school is National Autistic Society accredited. It has also gained the National Healthy Schools Bronze Status and Investors in People.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and rapidly improving school. The result of the outstanding care, guidance and support is the good progress pupils make in their learning and personal development, despite their complex learning difficulties. The high commitment to removing barriers to learning shown by leaders and shared by staff is reflected in all the school's work. The school was judged as good at the last inspection and has made significant improvements since then. For example, the extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles is now outstanding and the curriculum is good. Leaders and managers have tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection effectively. The school's track record of improvement demonstrates clearly the drive and determination that senior leaders provide. The school evaluates its own work with remarkable honesty and is fully aware of its strengths and areas for development. The school plans carefully to remedy any areas of weakness. These factors illustrate the good capacity that the school has to improve even further.

The quality of teaching is good and this ensures that pupils are well engaged in their learning. The attention to developing their basic skills in literacy is a very strong feature of teaching. The great majority of teaching secures good and occasionally outstanding progress. Teachers and their assistants work very closely together in the classroom and this makes a significant contribution to learning. The school knows that the slower pace of work in some lessons limits pupils' progress to good rather than outstanding, especially in respect of the more able pupils.

Pupils enjoy learning because the curriculum provides lots of attractive opportunities for them to develop their personal and communication skills. A wide range of stimulating experiences enables every pupil to gain accreditations for their work by the time they leave. Pupils love the regular 'super learning days' which provide enrichment along with plenty of lunchtime and after-school clubs. A good number of pupils have well-developed, creative and individually based curricular opportunities. The needs of these pupils are met very well and the school is in the process of developing this curricular approach for everyone.

Pupils are happy because they are treasured and valued as unique individuals. Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely good. Adults treat pupils with great care and respect at all times. Consequently, pupils are very confident about approaching adults regarding any concerns or worries they may have. The school provides very well-targeted support for everyone. Links with speech and language and other specialist support agencies are excellent and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and sense of well-being. Very strong arrangements exist to promote good attendance and this ensures that it is above average. As a result of these factors,

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pupils are able to take full advantage of the learning opportunities on offer.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the pace in lessons, especially for the more able pupils.
- Develop more individually based curricular opportunities for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Although pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities mean that they do not reach the levels of attainment reached by pupils of a similar age nationally, they make good progress overall from their starting points. This includes much good progress in literacy, numeracy, development of their computer skills and in their personal and social education. Every pupil leaves school with at least some accreditations in these areas of learning. A significant number of pupils gain an excellent range of accreditations by the time they leave school, a reflection of the outstanding progress made by these particular pupils. Pupils work hard, persevere and apply themselves diligently in lessons in order to acquire new knowledge and improve their understanding. They rightly take pride in their achievements and those of their peers. All pupils achieve equally well, including boys, girls and those from minority ethnic groups. Constant attention to communication and language development ensures that pupils make very good progress in these areas.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils mature well. They are curious about the world around them and keen to gain new experiences which broaden their learning. For example, pupils are always keen to use all their senses to learn and to take part in artistic, sporting and cultural activities. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They form very good and constructive relationships with others. Pupils' awareness of their own culture is strong, but their depth of understanding about different cultures in Britain is less well developed. Pupils show high levels of self-discipline in lessons. Behaviour is good. These factors make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

Pupils have an excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles, as a result of the very good support and teaching they receive in this area. For example, in a food technology lesson pupils could quickly and accurately identify which everyday foods are good for you. Participation in activities such as swimming and horse riding is very good. Pupils also have a good understanding of what constitutes unsafe situations and feel safe and secure in school. They say that bullying is not a significant problem. The school council makes a strong contribution to school improvement, for example, their suggestions about the design of several outdoor areas and learning resources in music were valued and implemented. Pupils are keen to take part in fundraising events for charities and good causes. Judging by their good attendance, communication skills development and good academic progress, pupils are well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?

Teachers know how pupils prefer to learn and how to cajole and motivate them in order to keep them on task. Basic skills in numeracy and information and communication technology are taught well. Instructions given to pupils are usually accompanied by the use of pictures, symbols and other aids to ensure that pupils understand the work. Adults manage challenging behaviour very well. All these factors ensure that pupils make good progress overall. A typical example of good teaching was seen in a history lesson where pupils were provided with a good range of learning experiences. Some pupils loved stroking the model horse or listening to relevant sounds whilst others preferred labelling a suit of body armour or developing their writing quietly. However, the pace of work is not always matched fully to pupils' needs, for example at the start of lessons and this slightly reduces the progress made by more-able pupils. Records about attainment and progress are clear. The school has a wealth of assessment information and this is being used with increasing effectiveness by teachers to plan lessons and support pupils' awareness of their learning targets.

The curriculum provides a good range of enjoyable learning experiences. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is good with some excellent features. There is ample opportunity to develop self-awareness, learn about health and safety matters and to develop understanding of how to make a contribution to the school and wider

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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community. Opportunities for integration and inclusion are good. A good number of pupils take part in lessons or attend courses at mainstream venues and this supports their learning well. Exciting educational visits, visitors and residential opportunities enrich the learning further. For example, a visitor recently helped pupils to learn more about birds of prey. The school is in the process of adjusting the curriculum to provide more individually based learning opportunities and also chances to extend learning about the multi-cultural nature of our society.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. The school's work with parents and carers ensures that pupils make good progress and that their well-being is assured. There are striking examples of where the school has helped particular pupils overcome significant barriers to their education. Careful assessments of pupils' personal and social needs are used to provide specialist support in the classroom. Very good care is taken to ensure that the school provides a safe environment.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leadership and management can be seen in the quality of provision and outcomes achieved and improvements since the last inspection. The senior leadership team and other leaders and managers are successful in inspiring the school community to share a strong sense of purpose. Inclusion lies at the heart of the school's work and everyone works together effectively to provide the very best support for pupils so that they can achieve well. The governing body uses their very good knowledge about autism to support the school effectively. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. This ensures that all groups of pupils achieve equally well within a safe environment. The school's relatively new headteacher has worked relentlessly to ensure improvements since the last inspection. Her influence is also highly evident in promoting higher quality teaching and assessment through developing good practice. As a result, positive steps are being taken to improve the effectiveness of teaching still further.

The governing body and staff are fully committed to safeguarding. Rigorous and effective procedures are very well understood by staff and implemented with great care. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and child protection. Careful attention is paid to ensure that everyone coming into regular contact with pupils is suitable.

The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion based on a

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clear analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. The impact of the school's work can be seen within the school and how pupils from different backgrounds get on very well with each other. The school actively engages with a range of community groups beyond the school and the immediate community. There are clear plans to increase the number and range of links abroad in order to make community cohesion even better.

The school's success is underpinned by very effective links with specialist support agencies, schools, colleges and others in the community. For example, speech and language and other specialists based in the school play an integral part in pupils' learning and well-being. The school has an effective partnership with parents and carers. Many courses, focus groups and events are available to help them become even more closely involved in their children's learning. This helps parents and carers to overcome their children's learning disabilities and to support learning at home. However, although home/school books are informative about many issues, more information about academic progress is desirable.

The management of resources is highly effective, including the use of the accommodation. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The inspection supports the positive views of the school, held by the very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire. Many were keen to express their appreciation of the quality of teaching, leadership and management and

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the fact that the school keeps their children safe. They feel listened to and highly valued as partners in promoting their children's learning and development. A very small minority expressed concerns about safety matters. However, inspectors found no evidence to substantiate these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Inscape House 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 54 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	52	7	33	1	5	1	5
The school keeps my child safe	13	62	6	29	1	5	1	5
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	62	7	33	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	33	10	48	2	10	2	10
The teaching is good at this school	13	62	7	33	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	52	8	38	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	38	11	52	1	5	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)	8	38	10	48	1	5	1	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	76	4	19	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	57	6	29	2	10	1	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	57	8	38	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	43	10	48	2	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	67	4	19	1	5	1	5

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



1 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Inscape House School, Cheadle, SK8 1JE

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome when we visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you all. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out about your school.

You told me that your school is good with some great things about it and I agree with you. The support you get in school from staff and other adults is excellent. Everyone makes sure you are happy and safe. You enjoy your learning because there are lots of exciting things for you to do in school. Your knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. Your behaviour is good and you help other people as much as you can.

You have good teachers and this is why you learn well and make good progress. The oldest pupils gain lots of certificates for their work. This helps to make sure they are ready to leave school when the time comes.

To make the school even better, I have asked teachers to move lessons along more quickly so that you all get through as much work as possible. Many of you are provided with an individual set of exciting things to do in school. This meets your individual needs well and so I have asked the school to do this for all of you.

Everyone is proud of you and the amazing work you all do. Well done to each and every one of you. Keep working hard.

Yours sincerely,

Saleem Hussain

Lead inspector

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