

# National Institute of Conductive Education

Independent school inspection report

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|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| DCSF registration number      | 330/6080        |
| Unique Reference Number (URN) | 103588          |
| Inspection number             | 348806          |
| Inspection dates              | 15–16 June 2010 |
| Reporting inspector           | Sue Aldridge    |

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

The National Institute of Conductive Education (NICE) includes a co-educational independent day special school providing for children with physical difficulties and wide-ranging learning difficulties. The school, situated in Birmingham, opened in 1987 and provides for children aged from three to 11 years old. NICE is part of the Foundation for Conductive Education, which works with children and adults with a range of problems affecting their mobility such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and strokes. The methodology of Conductive Education was developed in Hungary in the 1940s. It aims to help children and adults learn how to overcome problems with movement so they can lead more active and independent lives. The practice relies on specialised professionals called conductors who have degrees in Conductive Education obtained in Hungary or at Wolverhampton University. Their training incorporates aspects of teacher training. Most NICE conductors have dual conductor/qualified teacher status.

In the Early Years Intervention Group, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside those who are of statutory school age but are developmentally young. Children under three can attend a parent-child group at the school for one or two sessions per week. Currently, no children are in receipt of nursery funding. Children aged three to 11 can attend full time; for a fixed block of time (often repeated annually); or part time. Some of the part-time children attend mainstream school for the rest of their education. There are currently 22 children on roll, of whom eight attend full-time. The Foundation also provides part of the funding for a conductor at Great Barr primary school, situated a few miles from NICE, where Conductive Education is provided to children with physical difficulties on their school roll. The last inspection of NICE was in September 2007.

## Evaluation of the school

The National Institute of Conductive Education (NICE) provides a good quality of education and it meets its aims well. Some aspects of its provision are outstanding, including the arrangements to assure the welfare, health and safety of everyone on its site, and the way in which the staff encourage the personal development and

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

independence skills of the pupils. The school's safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education and development. The institute works most effectively with parents, who very much appreciate the provision it makes for their children. The single regulatory failure identified at the last inspection has been addressed and all the regulations are met.

## Quality of education

The institute provides a good quality of education; the curriculum and the teaching and assessment arrangements are also good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education; the provision is good and so children make good gains across all the areas of learning. Pupils make good progress and some make very good progress. There is a clear and comprehensive curriculum policy, setting out the methodologies of Conductive Education, and it is implemented well. Pupils are carefully assessed when they arrive and good account is taken of the needs described on their statements. Challenging individual objectives are devised for each pupil and these provide a high degree of personalisation so that activities are well matched to pupils' ages and needs. However, physical targets are not always measurable, making them difficult to evaluate. Groupings work well in practice, with those of similar levels of development being taught together in classes and groups. An excellent feature of the curriculum is the way in which physical activities are integrated into all sessions, so that pupils receive a good deal of physical exercise, including activities associated with speech and manipulation, while they are being taught National Curriculum subjects or activities associated with areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means that they do not need to miss teaching time to receive therapies and they continue learning alongside their peers. The strong emphasis on aspects such as personal and social development, communication and mathematics meets pupils' needs well. In addition to Conductive Education exercises, there are also enjoyable games such as basketball and bowling, but there is no swimming and some parents would like this to be provided. Classroom activities are planned within topics and this makes learning meaningful for pupils; several have favourite subjects and activities. There is good enrichment of the curriculum, achieved through a range of visits and visitors. These bring learning to life, add enjoyment and experiences that the school would not otherwise be able to provide, and enable pupils to mix with their mainstream peers and other adults.

Conductors know pupils exceptionally well and what their individual targets are. They have warm working relationships with pupils, who clearly feel secure and valued. High staffing levels in lessons mean that pupils are well supported and engaged. Support is well judged; conductors give pupils time to respond and they know when to prompt, so pupils do not become over-reliant on adult support. Pupils persevere with tasks, showing considerable determination to succeed, particularly when completing physical activities. They thoroughly enjoy the familiar sequences of activities and they join in with the songs that accompany these. Excellent teamwork by staff is effective in ensuring that all resources and equipment are to hand, so

transitions from one activity to the next are smooth and a good pace is maintained in almost all lessons. Resources for learning are good and include suitable furniture of good quality to enable Conductive Education approaches to be used. The school has invested in more information and communication resources since the last inspection and pupils enjoy using computers and white-boards. Electronic devices such as switches are used well to encourage communication skills, as well as signs and symbols. Conductors maintain informative ongoing records of pupils' progress, showing gains made in each half-term. The most useful ones have each entry dated so that rates of progress can be clearly seen. The school makes effective use of national scales to measure small gains made by pupils and assesses pupils using P levels as well as National Curriculum levels. There are plans to evaluate progress using recently published guidance this summer, but at present the school is not able to demonstrate how well their pupils make progress compared with similar pupils nationally.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Enjoyment is evident in the high attendance of pupils, despite the fact that some have regular authorised absences because of their medical conditions. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils of school age make particularly good gains in their independence skills, such as mobility, dressing, toileting and feeding because these are worked on daily. They grow in self-confidence and self-esteem as their achievements are frequently acknowledged, and they are delighted to be nominated 'pupil of the day'. When they learn about 'people who help us' and other topics, they find out how society works and become well aware of the need for rules, such as on the road, to protect themselves and other road users. Behaviour is outstanding. For the small number who find it difficult to behave well, conductors take advice from professionals and devise behaviour management plans. These are implemented well and behaviour improves significantly. Pupils give visitors a warm welcome and are proud of their school. They get on well together, learning about diversity in school from their contact with a wide range of people from other cultures and countries as well as through religious education lessons. They learn to take turns, and to value other children, such as acknowledging and celebrating their successes. They share important events, such as the birth of a new baby in the family, with their friends by showing them a photograph. They learn about the value of collaboration when they help to raise money for charity and take part in joint activities, such as creating a life-sized 'giant' for the entrance hall or performing with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Arrangements to secure pupils' welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The very strong commitment at all levels is demonstrated in the extensive training for staff in all aspects of welfare, health and safety; welfare requirements for the Early Years

Foundation Stage are exceeded. Rigorous daily checks carried out by the school's conscientious caretaker ensure that policies are translated into practice. The quality of the arrangements to encourage pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles has been recognised by the Birmingham City Council's Healthy Settings award. Pupils have a good deal of exercise daily and are given healthy and nutritious food at school, including a twice daily snack of fruit and vegetables. They are taught effectively how to keep themselves safe, when moving around school, on the roads and when using the internet. Arrangements to safeguard children are very good. Risk assessments, including for fire, are rigorous and wide ranging. Considerable thought has been given to fire evacuation procedures and this is why the Early Intervention Group is located upstairs. Parents are very pleased with the school's caring ethos. Several wrote in a complimentary way about this, recognising for instance 'the excellent rapport with children and their families'. The school has a suitable plan showing how it intends to increase access for people with disabilities over a three-year period and meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995).

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has robust arrangements for checking the suitability of staff before they are appointed to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. A check on medical fitness has been introduced for all staff appointments since the time of the last inspection. The school maintains a single central register showing the checks carried out, and this contains all the required information.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school's purpose-built premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn effectively, safely and securely. The corridors are wide and the rooms spacious, light and well ventilated. There is sufficient space for staff to work, including conductors and other staff employed by the institute, as well as good storage space. A dedicated room for parents of babies and toddlers to attend workshops with their children is a good feature, as this activity does not interfere with teaching in classes. An outdoor play area is securely fenced and has a suitable safety surface laid beneath adapted outdoor play equipment, such as swings for wheelchair users. However, the location of the early years classroom in relation to this area is not ideal. The premises are well adapted for people with mobility difficulties, including the provision of a lift and toilets. Further adaptations are planned to suit those with visual impairments as well as refurbishment to improve toileting facilities in the early years room.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for current and prospective parents, carers and local authorities through its prospectus and website. It also shares its expertise with others by hosting placements for school and university students. Annual reports on pupils' progress are informative and well illustrated with photographs of significant achievements. Home-school books are used well to

communicate with parents, who are involved well in children's learning. All the required information, such as that about annual reviews and an annual account for each pupil, is circulated to local authorities.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has an effective policy and procedures that allow for complaints to be considered fairly.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the setting is good. When they attend these, babies and toddlers benefit from the optional parent-child workshops, and children make good progress in all areas of learning. A few children make very good progress, although they do not reach the early learning goals because of their low starting points. Key workers maintain a good flow of information between home and school. Staff get to know children very well and assess them thoroughly on arrival. They use this information well to plan effectively to meet their individual needs; the setting makes good provision to meet the learning needs all of children. Activities are provided that cover all the areas of learning required at this stage. Individual objectives are identified for every child in each session, although those for physical development are not always precise enough. Conductors emphasise physical skill development strongly as well as the acquisition of personal and social skills. There is a suitable balance of adult-led activities as well as opportunities for play, but in the latter staff do not always allow children time to explore and experiment before intervening. The location of the classroom upstairs is not ideal in relation to the outdoor area, as it means that children cannot access activities set out inside and out of doors simultaneously. Nonetheless, the outdoor area is used well to simulate activities, such as going to the seaside, as well as for physical activities. There are excellent arrangements to care for children and conductors work most effectively as a team. However, not all are equally skilled at talking to children about what they are doing, in order to encourage their language development as well as their knowledge and understanding. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good; leaders know the strengths of the setting and have suitable plans for improvement, including further evaluation of children's progress.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

School:

- ensure that all records are dated so that rates of progress can be seen
- include opportunities for swimming in the curriculum
- write precise, measurable objectives for physical development so that progress in this area can be evaluated
- make use of national guidance to evaluate the progress made by pupils.

Early Years Foundation Stage:

- ensure that all conductors talk to children in such a way as to encourage their language development as well as their knowledge and understanding
- allow time for children to learn spontaneously when they are exploring or experimenting at play.



Inspection judgement recording form

|             |      |              |            |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

The quality of education

|  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Overall quality of education   |  | ✓ |  |  |
| How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils |  | ✓ |  |  |
| How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs         |  | ✓ |  |  |
| How well pupils make progress in their learning  |  | ✓ |  |  |

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | ✓ |  |  |  |
| The behaviour of pupils  | ✓ |  |  |  |

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils | ✓ |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|

The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

|   |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?                                     |  | ✓ |  |  |
| What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?   |  | ✓ |  |  |
| How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?  |  | ✓ |  |  |
| Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS? |  | ✓ |  |  |

## School details

|   |  |          |           |
|---|--|----------|-----------|
| Name of school  | National Institute of Conductive Education                 |          |           |
| DCSF number   | 330/6080   |          |           |
| Unique reference number (URN)                                 | 103588   |          |           |
| Type of school  | Special  |          |           |
| Status  | Independent  |          |           |
| Date school opened  | 1987   |          |           |
| Age range of pupils   | 3–11   |          |           |
| Gender of pupils  | Mixed  |          |           |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils)                             | Boys: 4  | Girls: 4 | Total: 8  |
| Number on roll (part-time pupils)                             | Boys: 11   | Girls: 3 | Total: 14 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need | Boys: 15   | Girls: 7 | Total: 22 |
| Annual fees (day pupils)                                      | £8,160 - 44,363 per annum                                  |          |           |
| Address of school   | Cannon Hill House<br>Russell Road<br>Birmingham<br>B13 8RD |          |           |
| Telephone number  | 0121 449 1569  |          |           |
| Fax number  | 0121 449 1611  |          |           |
| Email address   | wendy@conductive-education.org.uk                          |          |           |
| Headteacher   | Mrs Wendy Baker  |          |           |
| Proprietor  | Mr Roger David Wood  |          |           |
| Reporting inspector   | Sue Aldridge   |          |           |
| Dates of inspection   | 15–16 June 2010  |          |           |