



West Hill School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125463
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 281938
Inspection dates 20 June 2006 to 21 June 2006
Reporting inspector Greg Sorrell AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Kingston Road
School category	Community		Leatherhead
Age range of pupils	10 to 16		KT22 7PW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01372 814714
Number on roll	125	Fax number	01372 814710
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Sabrina Ertmann
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2000	Headteacher	Ms Judy Nettleton

Age group 10 to 16	Inspection dates 20 June 2006 - 21 June 2006	Inspection number 281938
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

West Hill School admits pupils from all parts of Surrey, all of whom have a statement of special education need, apart from two undergoing assessment. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties, although there is a wide range of other needs including autistic spectrum (ASD) and specific learning difficulties; some pupils have behavioural, emotional and social needs and some attend part-time. Attainment on entry is falling as a result of Local Authority (LA) policy, thus these pupils require additional support. The vast majority of pupils have White British heritage and four have English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

West Hill School is an outstanding school and provides excellent value for money, though the school gave itself an assessment of only good.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is well supported by the senior leadership team. The ethos of the school is typified by the commitment from all staff to work in the interests of the pupils, who achieve very well.

The pupils achieve extremely well in all subjects, irrespective of their special educational needs. In Key Stage 4, all pupils achieve well in a wide range of academic and vocational courses and some Year 9 pupils achieve good accreditation in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good overall with some outstanding features, notably the clear exposition of what is to be learned and enabling the pupils to reflect upon how well they have achieved. High expectations, good relationships, regular assessment and effective planning are the norm. Occasionally, the content of the text used is too hard for some pupils. Teaching assistants are making an increasingly significant contribution to meeting the pupils' needs. Therapists and visiting specialists make a good contribution to ensuring additional needs are met, although for reasons beyond the school's control, some pupils do not receive physiotherapy in accordance with their statements of special educational needs. The school is using its own resources to address some of these additional needs.

The curriculum is good with some strong features such as the emphasis on literacy, numeracy, vocational education, flexible programmes and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). However, the range of extra-curricular activities available during the week is narrow. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Significant improvements have been made to the school's accommodation since the last inspection.

Care and guidance for pupils are good, although very occasionally some targets set for pupils are not particularly useful when measuring progress. The school is already addressing this issue. The school's attention to supporting individual pupils' well-being is excellent.

The headteacher leads by example and the overall quality of leadership and management is excellent. The school consults widely about its own effectiveness and has an accurate view. Subject leaders are becoming increasingly involved in these processes. Development planning is appropriate, although the monitoring of success does not include all subject leaders and governors. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good and the school's capacity to improve further is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of all managers and all governors in the school's review of its success.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The pupils' achievement is excellent. The pupils achieve very well in GCSE and entry level courses in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and graphic design, Unit Award Scheme and National Skills Profile. Results in national examinations have increased steadily over the past three years and, in the last academic year, they went up remarkably. Pupils also achieve very well in Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network courses (ASDAN). Results from assessments over the past three years represent very good progress in relation to pupils' capabilities and prior attainment. As a result of high expectations, pupils in Year 9 achieved success in Entry Level mathematics. The vast majority of pupils achieve the challenging targets set for literacy and numeracy. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well on work experience and other flexible programmes. The progress that pupils make is due to very effective specialist teaching, an exemplary commitment to achievement and appropriate groupings based on pupils' prime needs. There are no significant differences in the achievements of any particular groups, including those with different special educational needs. Inevitably, due to the pupils' special educational needs, the standards reached at the school when compared to mainstream schools are low.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being is good as shown by their enjoyment of school and the very good attendance of the vast majority. In lessons and during breaks it is clear that they feel very secure and confident in their relationships. On rare occasions, a small minority display behavioural difficulties that adversely affect their achievement for short periods but they are assisted in resuming learning by good support from staff and their peers. Exclusion procedures are used appropriately and result in improved future learning outcomes for pupils.

The pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to achieve well and acquire a good knowledge of themselves. This aids their personal development, particularly their economic well-being and informed choice of destinations on leaving school. They also respond well to the emphasis on staying healthy and avoiding things that may be harmful.

The learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and their awareness of other cultures is an improvement since the last inspection. They appreciate the help they get with any problems and understand staff expectations for work and behaviour. Some pupils hold responsibilities which help the school to run smoothly, for example, ICT 'technicians'. The pupils' views are clearly expressed through the effective school council and regular tutorials, resulting in some positive responses and an innovative development plan. They feel that their school is a good place to be although they do worry unnecessarily that the school staff room and resource area extension will have an adverse effect on their playground space.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features that lead to the pupils' outstanding achievement. Excellent use is made of teachers' specialist knowledge that is communicated clearly to pupils so they know what each lesson is about and how they will know if they have been successful. The use of 'assessment for learning' is also excellent. Pupils are consistently encouraged to assess their own learning in relation to how independently they manage to work in the lessons.

Assessment of learning is thorough and all teachers have a good understanding of pupils' attainment and use this effectively to plan lessons. Teachers' use of ICT has improved since the last inspection although its use is not maximised in all subjects across the curriculum, and additional training is required in the use of interactive whiteboards. The quality of teaching literacy, numeracy and science is consistently good. Other subjects, including ICT, art and work-related learning, also benefit from the high expectations and good subject knowledge. Where appropriate, teachers modify text for pupils by use of symbols to support reading. However, occasionally, the reading level of some materials is too high for some pupils. Some teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to enliven pupils' learning.

Relationships with pupils are strong and encourage good attitudes to learning and behaviour. Effective use is also made of external specialists, for example, speech and language therapists and sports coaches, to support learning and pupils' additional needs. The close working relationship between teachers and teaching assistants has a significant impact on pupils' learning. Where teachers lead lessons, assistants are well briefed and support pupils well. An increasing amount of teaching is provided by teaching assistants. This is well monitored by management and the quality is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with many strengths. It has a strong focus on literacy and numeracy in all subjects, such as PSHCE, accreditation and vocational learning. Opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum are good overall. Access to physical and creative activities, including competitive sports, aids the pupils' health, fitness and social development.

The school makes good use of national and local strategies to increase the curriculum's relevance to pupils which reflects an excellent commitment to equality of opportunity. Some pupils have specific time to further their achievement, confidence, self-esteem and social development - for example, in adventurous off-site activities and attendance at local schools, a college of further education and extended work experience. Good use is also made of mini-enterprises to develop economic awareness. Visits to the local community enhance citizenship education.

The provision of residential experiences enriches the curriculum although the range of extra-curricular activities is narrow.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, advice and guidance to safeguard pupils is good. Child protection procedures are well known and followed by all staff. Recent training to meet the needs of pupils with additional special educational needs helps to ensure good provision as the school changes its role.

Staff ensure that pupils are safe, and the whole school community ensures that pupils with physical disabilities are afforded total respect, dignity and consideration. All behavioural issues or examples of good effort are carefully logged and followed up. The appointment of a full-time 'pastoral support assistant' is a good indicator of the considerable lengths to which the school will go to support the pupils' personal and emotional needs. Home visits are made where necessary and attendance by pupils has improved where they had earlier been reluctant. Instances of sensitive and discrete support for pupils' welfare are common and fully in keeping with the school's 'extra mile' ethos. The monitoring of vulnerable pupils, including looked after children, is very good although specific attention to monitoring assessment data from pupils with an additional language has only recently been identified. All pupils have targets that are regularly reviewed and work to make these targets more easily measurable is underway.

Links with external agencies, such as careers guidance, therapists and social services are effective. However, for reasons beyond the school's control, significant numbers of pupils do not receive occupational therapy or physiotherapy as required by their statements of special education need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher gives outstanding leadership and is well supported by her senior leadership team. Together, they have a very good understanding of the school's effectiveness and future role within the local education authority's overall strategy. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good, for example, in better achievement, greater staff expertise, accommodation and increased flexibility in the curriculum. Consequently, the school's capacity for further improvement is excellent.

Leadership and management are good overall in subjects and in other aspects including assessment, outreach support for other schools, vocational education and special educational needs. The school has a good range of self-review procedures that seek the views of parents, pupils and staff. The processes for self-evaluation are developing well at whole school level and in some subjects.

Performance management is effective and all staff have a clear understanding of the headteacher's high expectations of them and the pupils. Formal and informal monitoring

of teaching and learning is a regular activity and contributes to the quality of teaching. Effective monitoring of pupils' literacy and numeracy achievement, as well as of their behaviour, contributes significantly to the quality of learning.

In recognition of the need to adapt its practice in the light of its changing intake, firm plans have been made to make the best use of resources; for example, adjusting the sizes of teaching groups according to need. Additionally, there will be close involvement of senior management in the professional development of teaching assistants, in order to further their subject expertise.

The management of relationships with other agencies to support the pupils is excellent. Strong encouragement of parental involvement is also evidenced by good attendance at annual reviews and by a survey of their views. The overwhelming majority endorse the work of the school. One parent wrote, 'My son is articulate and confident, and we have the school to thank for that. The headteacher and staff are committed to our children.'

Current priorities in the development plan are relevant to the school's present and future needs. Building developments are extremely well managed by a member of the school's effective administrative team. All aspects are monitored, although the headteacher has to take too much responsibility for some aspects and the governors' role is underemphasised. Nevertheless, the governors possess considerable skills that support the school's continued improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Thank you for helping me to find my way around your school and for making me so welcome.

I am very pleased to say that you go to an excellent school! It is clear from your excellent achievement that you play your part too, as well as Ms Nettleton, teachers and staff. The school is a pleasant place to be and it's clear that you enjoy being there! As I walked around the school and went in to lessons, I was impressed by the way you worked hard and did your best. At break-times and lunch-times, it was good to see everyone get on and play games or just have a chat. I managed to speak to quite a lot of you and had the chance to meet with the school council. I know the council have lots of meetings and it is a useful way of letting teachers and other staff know how you feel. You have made some useful suggestions about uniform and school dinners, and staff value your ideas. You told me that you feel safe at school and staff help you with any problems. You also told me that you would like more clubs at lunch-time and I agree with you that these would be helpful. I also heard you are worried about losing some play space because of the new building. Actually, I don't think you will miss out too much as there are other play areas and a fantastic playing field. I was pleased with your range of lessons and I know you like trips away! I enjoyed watching some of you make sausage rolls and cakes in preparation for a school party. I enjoyed eating them even more! It's clear to see how much you benefit from going to college and doing work experience. Wall displays have lots of pictures of your achievements and I hope you have some copies to keep. I know you will want to keep the certificates you achieve, especially in the last year at school. These will be very useful to show when you leave school and go to college or get a job.

I'm asking Ms Nettleton to involve even more teachers and governors in keeping a check on how the school is doing. This should enable your school to keep up its good work and become even better in the future.

Yours sincerely

Greg Sorrell

Lead Inspector