

# Newick House School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126164
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	340933
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kay Charlton

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	160
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Chapman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Perry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Birchwood Grove Road Burgess Hill RH15 0DP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent more than 75% of their time evaluating the quality of pupils' learning. They visited 20 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, teachers' planning, assessment information, annual reviews and pupils' work. Sixty-two questionnaires from parents, 85 from pupils and 40 from staff were analysed.

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

- the extent to which teaching ensures all pupils achieve their best, with a focus on girls and pupils with complex needs
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in supporting pupils' learning given the difficulties presented by the accommodation and taking account of the school's specialism
- the extent to which provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage supports children's achievements
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in sustaining improvement, especially in teaching, learning and the curriculum.

## Information about the school

Newick House is a special school designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, although an increasing number of pupils entering the school have complex needs. Many are on the autistic spectrum and have a wide range of communication difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs. Most come from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. Currently there are ten children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, who are taught in two Reception classes. The school is part of a reorganisation of local special schools which involves a move to new accommodation. The school gained specialist status in communication and interaction in July 2009. It runs a range of extended school provision, for example a breakfast club and holiday play schemes. The school has a number of awards, including the Full International Schools Award and the Healthy School, Sportsmark and Activemark awards. It runs an outreach service supporting other schools in the local authority.

**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

Newick House is an outstanding school that not only allows pupils to achieve exceptionally well, but to develop into confident, caring and mature young adults. A key factor in the school's success is the respect that all members of the community show to each other. Staff know the pupils exceptionally well and put them at the forefront of all their work. This results in a cohesive, purposeful and happy community where pupils enjoy working hard and where learning is highly effective. Excellent teaching ensures that pupils of different backgrounds and abilities, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make outstanding progress. As a result, even though attainment is well below that in mainstream schools, all pupils gain national accreditation in a range of areas by the time they leave, for example at Entry Level and in GCSE.

Support and guidance, as well as work in lessons, are very carefully tailored to meet the needs of each individual. This ensures that all have equal opportunities to succeed. Across the school, the curriculum is extremely well adapted to meet the needs and aspirations of pupils with a wide range of programmes, such as one focused on increasing pupils' social and interaction needs. There is a very well-balanced range of academic, vocational and outstanding work-related opportunities and staff compensate extremely well for difficulties presented by the building. The outcomes for pupils are greatly enhanced by the school's outstanding partnerships with others, including the on-site speech and language team.

The headteacher, very ably supported by the senior team, has extremely high expectations of staff and pupils and sets ambitious targets, based on rigorous and honest self-evaluation. Their relentless pursuit of excellence is an outstanding feature of the school. As a result, the school goes from strength to strength and has embraced its specialist status in a way that is making a difference not only to pupils' interaction and communication but, also, to their overall achievements. Strategic use of staffing and a highly effective programme of professional development ensure that staff give of their best. Governance is excellent and this is an important factor in the school's continuing drive for improvement. The school is very aware of its strengths and those areas that are in need of improvement. Even though community cohesion is good the school has recognised that its audit of this provision is not fine tuned enough to ensure pupils fully appreciate differences between groups in the wider community. This is because the audit takes insufficient account of the school's religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. The track record of improvement since the last inspection shows that the school is extremely well placed to sustain

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improvement in future.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine its audit of community cohesion, taking full account of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context, to ensure that pupils fully appreciate differences between groups in the wider community.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Excellent achievements are the result of pupils working hard and concentrating very well in lessons. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is evident in the way they approach their activities. Consequently, throughout the school, virtually all pupils achieve their challenging targets, and many exceed them. This was clearly seen in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Key Stage 3 where pupils showed very good understanding of the use of the signs to represent 'more than' and 'less than' as well as developing a keen enjoyment of the subject. The school caters for individual pupils very effectively and ensures different groups, such as girls, those with complex needs and the few who speak English as an additional language, achieve extremely well.

Pupils respond very positively to the school's calm and purposeful ethos. Times of quiet reflection, as seen in an assembly about friendship, make a strong contribution to their very supportive attitudes towards each other and their outstanding behaviour. Pupils feel very safe in school and, as evidenced by the Healthy School, Sportsmark and Activemark awards, have an excellent understanding of the need to keep healthy. Their attendance is good because they enjoy school so much, particularly the extensive range of out-of-school activities. As one said, 'This school is brilliant.' Pupils learn to work well in groups and also how to express their opinions very well. Older ones take on many responsibilities, such as acting as 'buddies' for younger pupils. In a wider context they act very successfully as ambassadors for the school, for example by caring for the elderly and as representatives on the West Sussex Youth Cabinet. The school is working effectively to extend the range of whole-school responsibilities for its primary-aged pupils. By the time they leave, all pupils gain a Duke of Edinburgh award, an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Youth Award and many gain a Sports Leaders Award. These all recognise pupils' excellent achievements in personal development. With their vastly improved basic skills, including outstanding skills in information and communication technology, pupils are extremely well prepared for life after they leave school. All move on successfully to further education or employment.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Staff very carefully assess pupils' progress and they ensure that pupils understand when they have done well, often by celebrating their successes at the end of lessons. Pupils learn to take part in assessing their own work and this increases their determination to succeed. This was shown clearly in a discussion with a Year 9 pupil about his progress in information and communication technology. Teachers know their pupils very well and this enables them to plan interesting and well-paced activities which motivate all to do their best. Support staff are well trained and work very effectively with teachers as part of the team. This ensures that a high level of support and individual tuition is given to each pupil. In turn, the pupils gain the confidence to try new things and so learn faster. The management of behaviour is excellent. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the clear routines and with the support of staff make marked improvements in their behaviour from when they first start at Newick House.

The carefully constructed curriculum is tailored to the wide range of pupils' needs. Information and communication technology is a strength and staff make excellent use of this resource to enhance learning in all subjects. Personal, health and social education underpins much of the school's work and every opportunity is taken to improve pupils' personal skills. The school makes outstanding provision for the development of pupils' communication and interactive skills, consistent with its specialist status, and this is highly effective in promoting their confidence and their access to learning opportunities. The very wide range of out-of-school activities,

<sup>1</sup> 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 expectation of the pupils' age.

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including residential visits for all year groups, add substantially to the developments of pupils' social skills, their self-confidence and their interest in learning.

The school provides a very high standard of care for all of its pupils. Pupils, including any who face challenging circumstances, are extremely well supported in each stage of their learning not only by school staff but also by a wide range of other professionals. Parents receive accurate and comprehensive progress reports and questionnaires show a high degree of satisfaction with their level of involvement in their children's education. Pupils receive excellent advice and support as they are about to leave school so that they make a smooth transition to the next stage of their lives.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher embeds ambition and drives improvement extremely well, as seen in improvements in teaching, learning and the curriculum since the last inspection. Along with senior leaders and governors she has communicated a clear vision and programme for improvement and secured the support of staff. Curriculum leaders take on new challenges with enthusiasm and play an important part in school improvement. Governors have a wide range of skills and use these very well to support and challenge the school. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are extremely thorough and effective. The school has very strong links with others, including parents and carers, and is highly successful in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Resources are deployed very effectively to achieve the best possible outcomes for individual pupils, whatever their needs, and the school provides excellent value for money.

There are strengths in community cohesion, for example through pupils' involvement in a very extensive work-experience programme, and through activities undertaken to gain the International School award. The school is aware that its audit of provision is not sufficiently refined, with more to do particularly in terms of analysing the school's religious, cultural and socio-economic context.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of the outstanding provision, girls and boys make excellent progress, with no differences between different groups. They achieve especially well in their personal, social and emotional development and in the ways in which they learn to communicate their ideas. They settle quickly into school and develop confidence and independence. Staff plan activities with a well-thought-out balance between those that children can choose for themselves and those led by an adult. They are skilful at organising activities that match children’s interests, as seen when the children created a snowman using collage materials. The outdoor area is used very effectively to cover all six areas of learning. Children are safe and extremely well cared for and all welfare procedures are of extremely high quality. Relationships are excellent and children play happily together. Very close links are established with families and this supports children’s learning very well.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are excellent. Leaders have an accurate view of what to do next to improve the provision even further. Very clear plans are in place to improve aspects of the accommodation.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
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

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## Views of parents and carers

The responses of parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They indicate that their children are very happy at school. They are also extremely positive about the way in which it prepares their children for the future and about the school's leadership. Comments such as 'This is a fantastic school and we are so happy with the progress our daughter has made' sum their views up well. Parents and carers are appreciative of the care their children receive.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newick 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 160 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	60	22	35	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	49	79	13	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	69	18	29	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	65	17	27	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	76	13	21	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	65	18	29	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	65	22	35	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	52	22	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	69	17	27	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	69	16	26	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	58	26	42	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	89	6	10	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	87	7	11	1	2	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 all 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.



14 January 2010

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Newick House School, Burgess Hill RH15 ODP**

Thank you for all of your help when we visited your school to find out how well you are getting on. We particularly enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to some of you.

We judged your school to be outstanding. Here is a list of the really excellent things that we saw.

- You try very hard in your lessons and your teachers make sure that you make really good progress.
- You work together very well and your behaviour is excellent.
- You clearly enjoy your lessons as well as other activities such as taking part in visits where you stay away from home and in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
- You feel safe and the adults make sure that you are extremely well looked after.
- You are very successful on work experience and extremely well prepared for life after school.
- Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school do an outstanding job.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this, we want them to fine tune aspects of the school's work to help you appreciate more fully differences between groups in the wider community.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton  
Lead inspector

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