

# Gosden House School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125452
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	359888
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kay Charlton

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

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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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>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maurice Byham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jon David
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Horsham Road Bramley, Guildford Guildford GU5 0AH
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<b>Age group</b>	4–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	359888

**Boarding provision**

**Social care Unique Reference Number**

SC013886

**Social care inspector**

John Chivers

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**Age group**

4–16

**Inspection dates**

8–9 December 2010

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors and one social care inspector. They observed 17 lessons and 14 fourteen class teachers were seen. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and students. The work of the school was observed and inspectors scrutinised the school improvement plan, the minutes of the leadership team and governing body meetings, assessment information and a range of other documentation. Thirty questionnaires from parents and carers, 77 from students and 50 from staff were analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of teaching in challenging all students, particularly those with the most complex needs.
- The extent to which the school's specialist status is used for the benefit of all students.
- The effectiveness of the systems for tracking students' progress and setting challenging targets.
- The effectiveness of the boarding provision.
- The impact of the provision in visual and expressive arts, and sports on students' achievements.

## Information about the school

Gosden House School caters for students with a wide range of learning difficulties ranging from moderate to severe. The complexity of students' needs has increased in recent years. Many have associated speech, language and communication difficulties and a minority are on the autistic spectrum. All have a statement of special educational needs or are being assessed for one. The school has a mixed primary department and an all-girls secondary department. The school provides boarding provision for up to 38 boarders on a rolling programme. As part of the school's outreach work, pupils from mainstream schools attend lessons on a sessional basis and some Gosden students attend mainstream schools. The overwhelming majority of students are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class. The school has a number of awards, including the International School award and Healthy Schools status. It is a Rights Respecting School and it gained specialist status for Cognition and Learning in September 2010.

**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

Gosden House is an outstanding school. Students achieve exceptionally well. They grow in confidence and self-belief and their behaviour, attitudes and manners are exemplary. Students thoroughly enjoy school and want to do their best and, as result, they make excellent progress. Teaching and learning are excellent. Staff have high expectations and challenge students of different abilities, including those with the most complex needs. The school has been extremely successful in developing its staff to ensure their expertise matches the changing needs of the school population. The excellent management of teaching and learning provides targeted training for staff so that there is continual improvement of classroom practice. Planning is carefully tailored to provide exciting experiences for students and makes best use of the skills of teaching assistants and therapists so that there is a seamless approach.

The innovative curriculum with exceptionally strong provision in the visual and expressive arts and sport ensures that students are highly motivated. The links with the Globe Theatre and other schools support this work extremely well. The school's specialism is used very effectively for the benefit of all students, enabling all groups of pupils, whatever their needs, to make excellent progress. Personal development is a cornerstone of the provision and underpinning everything is the high quality of care, guidance and support for students. This is exemplified in the outstanding boarding provision that makes an invaluable contribution to all aspects of students' development. The quality of education is as strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage as in other year groups.

The school is led with passion and commitment by the headteacher, who has a very clear vision about future developments. The outstanding leadership by the senior team has ensured highly effective management at all levels of the school. All staff see their management roles as contributing to the school's success and display, along with the students, a strong belief that it takes 'many hearts to make a school'. Outstanding governance includes key contributions by governors towards the school's strategic development and in ensuring it provides excellent value for money. The school has recently gained specialist school status for cognition and learning. It is a leader in this field, with highly effective use of staff's skills to ensure students' needs are met. It has developed very rigorous and robust systems to track students' progress and set them challenging targets. It makes very effective use of this information to intervene if students are not doing quite as well as they might and to guide school improvement planning. However, it does not use the data about students' progress to the best advantage to show governors, parents and carers, and other stakeholders how well the school is performing overall. The school has recognised this as an improvement priority. The rigour of its self-evaluation and the excellent monitoring procedures underpinning all aspects of school life ensure that a pattern of continual improvement is well established. The school makes very effective use of its strong links with others, including parents and carers, to support its

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development and, with the drive and enthusiasm of its staff, this means that it is extremely well placed to improve further.

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

- Use the data about students' progress more effectively to show parents and carers, governors and other stakeholders how well the school is performing overall.
- The school must ensure that it meets the National Minimum Standards for boarding which have not been met.

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

**1**

Across the school, students, including the very few who speak English as an additional language, enjoy learning and make outstanding progress from their starting points. The high expectations of staff and the focus they give to the development of students' skills in language and communication ensures that students' achievements are excellent. A good example was seen in an outstanding drama lesson in Year 2, where students made excellent gains in understanding about different characters and also about how to work in a large space such as the music/drama studio. By age 16, all gain a good range of qualifications which enable them to move successfully to the next stage of learning.

All aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. They show great sensitivity to each other's feelings and support each other very well. They use times of reflection in an extremely mature way. Through the school council, students contribute to the school community, for example by helping to ensure the smooth running of the 'Gosden X Factor'. Through the school's extensive links they contribute exceptionally well to the wider community. Students are confident to express their views on a range of issues and fully endorse the principles expected of a Rights Respecting School. They are clear that they are listened to and that they feel safe and secure in school. They show excellent understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and enthusiastically take part in the wide-ranging opportunities for physical development as recognised by the Healthy Schools award. Students' attendance is good and, through the focused development of their literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology skills, as well as their personal skills, they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
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>1</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:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<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 expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers and support staff work together very well as a team and have a highly effective approach to behaviour management. Their relationships with students are excellent and enable everyone to make a crucial contribution to learning. Staff assess each student's progress carefully and, as a result, match activities very effectively to meet their individual needs. The emphasis they place on language and communication benefits students of different backgrounds and abilities, as seen in the recent 'Talk to Me' project, which involves students in making their own 'talking books'. Staff use resources, including information and communication technology, very well to motivate students and they are extremely positive and yet discerning in their feedback, reflecting their high expectations for each one. The ways in which senior leaders work alongside other staff is an important factor in the continuing professional development of everyone in the team.

The curriculum provides an extremely wide range of opportunities to ensure an excellent match between students' needs and academic, practical and creative activities. It is very carefully tailored to the aspirations of each student, with individualised timetables as needed and highly effective work through its specialist focus, for example to support students' development in mathematics. The provision is enhanced extremely well through visits to the theatre, museums, after-school clubs, the choir and residential visits, such as

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to the Isle of Wight. These not only add to students' enjoyment of school but very successfully link their learning to real-life experiences. The extensive school grounds, including the soft and hard play areas, enhance greatly the quality of provision. A very carefully organised work experience programme ensures that students develop the skills needed in life once they leave school.

Staff make sure that all students, including those who arrive at different times, settle quickly and happily into school life. Transition arrangements for those moving into the school, and those who move to other schools and colleges, contribute extremely well to reducing students' anxieties. Students receive very good advice to help them make choices about the next stage in their lives. The extremely good links with others, including parents and carers and other agencies, ensures that support is very well targeted to those with identified needs. The work of the school's home-school liaison officer is particularly effective in supporting vulnerable students.

*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 drive and ambition of the headteacher creates a 'can do' culture that ensures that the school's motto of 'Children come first' happens in practice. Senior staff work very well with other staff as part of a team, ensuring that the quality of teaching is continually improved so that students benefit. Governors' clear grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development, and their breadth of knowledge about the school, ensure they challenge the school with relevant and searching questions that help drive its strategic management.

All staff respond enthusiastically to their roles and responsibilities so that key developments are tackled in an extremely positive way. This positive approach has underpinned the school's successful bid for specialist status. All adults who work in the school have very good opportunities to develop as professionals and use their skills to best effect for the students.

Community cohesion is outstanding. The school's contribution in a local and national context is very strong. Through its work on the International Schools award, the school has wide-ranging links with schools across Europe. Students and staff have been on exchange visits with students and staff from other countries and all have benefited greatly from these experiences.

Safeguarding procedures follow statutory requirements and the school's extremely well focused policies ensure that all aspects of safeguarding, child protection and health and safety are understood and rigorously applied by all. The school is leading practice in a

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wider forum through its work with a national foundation to build up guidance that will help ensure the safe use of mobile devices with students with special educational needs. Inclusion is at the heart of all the school's work. Promoting equality and tackling discrimination are supported by excellent policies that ensure 'every child matters'. The support for those who are most vulnerable is particularly impressive.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</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>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children benefit from the excellent provision and make outstanding progress. They make exceptionally good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and show significant gains in their confidence and independence. The staff work with parents and carers to ensure that there are clear judgments on each child's starting point. This enables staff to tailor experiences to individual needs and measure accurately the progress that all children make. The environment provides a stimulating mix of indoor and outdoor activities, as seen when the children made the most of finding out about the ice that had formed in the outdoor area while others pretended to make a meal in the indoor area. Learning is fun, and teachers maintain a good pace, with a wide range of free and guided activities. Behaviour is excellent because the children are busily involved in learning.

Care is outstanding and the repetition of good habits and hygiene means they are well remembered by the children. Links to health professionals and therapy teams are used very effectively to help address children's specific needs. Safeguarding is as strong as in the main school. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, with high expectations that drive the aspirations and impact of the team.

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*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

## Boarding provision

Boarding provision is outstanding. It is organised and managed to a high professional standard and gives an equally high professional standard of care to all students, having full regard for equality and diversity.

Students enjoy a balanced and nutritious diet and any special medical, cultural or preferential diets are catered for extremely well. They assist in shopping for provisions and help to prepare meals. Meals are of good quality and meal times are pleasant, well-ordered social occasions. Staff are trained in food hygiene and the school's catering arrangements meet the standards of the local environmental health department. Students' health and medical care needs are well met. There are detailed health and medical care histories in students' files and staff regularly monitor their health care needs. A local general practice is available and the community nurse visits monthly. Medication is securely held and students receive safe and diligent medical care from staff who are trained in first aid and medication administration. Medication is dispensed in a caring and reassuring manner. Students are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle with opportunities to engage in regular physical exercise.

Staff are aware of the importance of confidentiality and any confidential information is securely held. Students are treated with dignity and staff respect their privacy, attending to their intimate and personal care needs in a sensitive way. Students and their parents and carers have unrestricted access to the school's complaints procedure; however, the procedure does not contain the contact details of Ofsted. Students say they have no complaints or concerns and are confident that any would be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. The school complaints book confirms that none have been received. Students are protected from harm and abuse, by staff trained in child protection and alert to safeguarding issues. Students are supervised closely and staff advise them about their personal safety, reinforcing aspects of the school's curriculum. External organisations help educate students regarding their safety, particularly around the use of cell phones and the internet. Students say they feel safe in school and that staff have full regard for their protection and well-being. They live in an environment free from bullying and are confident staff would be quick to identify and deal with any such behaviour. Students show friendship and respect for each other, and the homely, caring and accepting practice helps to ensure bullying does not occur. There is a clear missing persons procedure and there have been no unauthorised absences from boarding. Students' behaviour is exceptionally well managed by staff trained in behaviour management and who fully understand the needs of individual students. There are excellent relationships and students respond to staff requests and instructions in a positive

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and cheerful manner. Students are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own actions, being polite and respectful to each other, staff and visitors. Physical restraint is not used and the implementation of sanctions is rare. The school takes active steps to keep everyone safe from fire or other hazards and no safety hazards were evident in the areas accessed. Standards of cleanliness and hygiene are high throughout. The school’s recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and help to ensure only suitable staff are employed to look after the students. Staff personnel files hold all required information.

Staff fully support students’ education and learning and actively engage them in a wide range of both sedentary and active experiences in boarding time. Students enjoy these, for example the theme nights where they learned about other cultures. Boarding staff liaise closely with their teaching colleagues. Students benefit from a high level of care and support from a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Parents and carers praise the school regarding the quality of care provided and students confirm their appreciation.

Students learn how to communicate their views and they exercise choice in a range of situations. They say staff listen to them and act upon their suggestions as appropriate. There is a clear admissions process. Students leave the school in a planned way and transition plans and pathway plans are in place which include independence training and work experience. Students have clear care plans that are regularly monitored and reviewed by staff. Any contact students have with their parents and significant others is carefully recorded.

Students are well presented in clothes that are age- and fashion-appropriate. Parents and carers supply pocket money which is held in safekeeping by staff. Students have access to personal requisites and toiletries. They live in a safe and very well maintained environment. There is adequate communal, private and recreational space which is decorated, furnished and equipped to a very good standard. All areas have a comfortable, warm and homely ambience. Students’ bedrooms are of an equal standard and personalised. Toilet and bathing facilities are of a very good standard and afford privacy.

Students and their parents/carers are given sufficient information about the school. The staff have the necessary skills, experience and competencies to meet the needs of students and enable the boarding section to achieve its aims. They are supportive of the school’s management and appreciate its open and inclusive style. There is excellent communication between the staff team. The headteacher and head of care closely monitor the conduct of the boarding provision, and Standard 33 half-termly visits are undertaken. These activities act as an effective quality assurance mechanism. Questionnaires are also received from students, parents and carers in order to secure their views on the service provided.

**National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care**

Ensure the contact details of Ofsted are included in the school’s complaints procedure. (NMS 4.8)

*These are the grades for the boarding provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the boarding provision</b>	<b>1</b>
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## **Views of parents and carers**

Under a third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. The views expressed have been supplemented with information derived from the school's own surveys. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their views about the school. As one said, 'He has been nothing but happy since day one because they are providing an environment that helps him to flourish and thrive.' The inspection shows that such comments are well founded. The inspection team found no evidence to support the concerns, notably about being informed about the progress their child makes, expressed by a very small number of parents and carers.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gosden 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	63	9	30	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	67	9	30	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	60	11	37	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	57	13	43	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)	14	47	11	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	70	9	30	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	57	12	40	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	50	14	47	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	80	6	20	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><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.

**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.**



10 December 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Gosden House School, Guildford GU5 0AH**

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed being able to talk to you. You told us very clearly that you really enjoy school, that you make a lot of friends and that you make very good progress. We agree with you that the school provides you with an excellent education with many exciting things to do, including being able to stay in the brilliant boarding provision and the work with the Globe Theatre. As a result, you gain confidence and independence and, by age 16, you gain qualifications so that you are extremely well prepared for work or further education. ♦

To improve things even more, we want the school to make better use of the data about your progress to show your parents and carers, governors and the wider community how successful the school is overall.

We know that you will try your very best at all times to help the staff to make Gosden House even better.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead inspector

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