

# Breakspeare School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117681
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312671
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Smith

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	64
6th form	9
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Vyra Navaratnam
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gill Williamson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Gallows Hill Lane Abbots Langley Hertfordshire WD5 0BU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923263645
<b>Fax number</b>	01923260087

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Breakspeare School provides for pupils who have a statement of special educational need and who have a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include severe, profound, and multiple learning difficulties. In addition, there are increasing numbers with additional medical needs and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Nearly a third of pupils are wheelchair users. The school was recognised as an Investor in People organisation in January 2006 and currently holds the National Healthy Schools Award, the information and communication technology (ICT) Quality Mark Award and the International School Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school because leadership and management put pupils' achievement and well-being at the top of their agenda. The conscientious and effective headteacher has a clear vision driving improvement, which is shared by the whole school. She offers excellent support to all staff and is herself very well supported by a highly competent deputy and assistant headteacher. With a particularly dedicated staff and well-informed governors, the school continues to improve the provision and learning opportunities for all pupils. Monitoring and self-evaluation involves the whole school and development planning shows staff have a clear understanding of what needs to improve and how to achieve success. A parent reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'The school is extremely well managed in a professional, competent and caring manner and all staff are entirely devoted to the pupils. They are to be congratulated for the tremendous effort they put in to meeting all pupils needs'. The school is a strong community, nurturing pupils' personal and academic development and celebrating their achievements. Very effective partnerships with external support agencies, schools, colleges and the community, ensure pupils' personal needs are very well met.

Due to the severity and complexity of their learning difficulties and disabilities, pupil standards are very low. Given their starting points, and the nature of these difficulties, the achievement and progress of the great majority of pupils is outstanding. Parents confirm that their children's confidence and social development is a direct result of this success. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their confidence and communication skills, which are effectively built upon as they move through the school. Pupils become independent learners, make choices and achieve challenging targets. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of their exceptional attitudes to learning and their excellent relationships with each other and staff. All of this is nurtured most effectively, by the outstanding care, support and guidance and the excellent teaching and support they receive. Pupils' progress is monitored, recorded and analysed effectively, which ensures they receive the level of support and challenge they need to make progress. The curriculum is outstanding particularly as it supports pupils' personal development very effectively. It is constantly being developed to ensure it meets pupils' ever changing and complex needs. Exciting and interesting activities are planned, which motivate pupils. Visits abroad, into the community, work in schools and colleges and visiting specialists all very effectively enrich pupils' learning opportunities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as is their contribution to the community. Pupils show consideration and support for each other and their behaviour is excellent, as a result. Parents are consistent in their praise for the school. One wrote, 'My son really likes going to school and he has come on so much. The school is simply outstanding in its care, teaching and support for children and their families'. The school has made excellent progress on improvements since the last inspection through rigorous development planning and subsequent action. The new sports hall is an excellent example of this; it is a first class resource which is well utilised by the school and the community. The school is aware of the need to improve the outdoor play area for Reception children and work is already underway. Governors are well-informed and are involved to a good extent in monitoring, self-evaluation and in the strategic management of the school. The school's capacity for continued improvement is excellent.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Students make extremely good progress in their academic and vocational skills and in their personal development as a result of the school's outstanding provision. By the time they transfer to further education courses at college, students have gained a wide range of qualifications, including the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) 'Toward Independence Award', and a variety of Certificates of Achievement. Students' personal development is outstanding and they leave school as confident and responsible young people. They make excellent progress in developing their confidence, self-esteem and in acquiring such basic skills as working on computers and reading instructions. Outstanding leadership of the Post-16 provision has resulted in continued improvements in the Enterprise Unit such as the development of the Young Enterprise initiative where students recently won the marketing award in competition with other similar schools in the county.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

By the end of Reception, all children, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, make good progress, particularly in communication skills and in their personal and social development. Good teaching and use of assessment in planning ensures that activities are well matched to children's' different learning needs. Accommodation and learning resources are used effectively to promote each area of learning. Although good use is made of the classroom to promote physical development, the uncovered outdoor play area offers too limited a range of physical activities. Excellent leadership and management has ensured there is effective support for new staff, an appropriate curriculum and excellent partnerships with parents who express positive views of the provision.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure the outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage is equipped adequately to support children's physical development.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Children in the Foundation Stage are provided with a good start to learning and, as a result, they make good progress. Good progress continues throughout the school so by the time students leave their achievement is exceptional. All students leave school with a range of relevant accredited qualifications, and a variety of Certificates of Achievement. All students, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, take up college courses when they leave school. Students make excellent progress in vocational skills as a result of the outstanding provision for work related learning. The outstanding progress in their personal and social development is because of the highly effective development of their social, communication and independence skills in all lessons. As a result, pupils' preparation for the future is excellent. Pupils' needs are individually assessed and supported and this helps to ensure that all pupils are challenged to do their very best. Pupils' confidence is further raised when their academic and social achievements, as well as their efforts, are celebrated at every opportunity.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Behaviour is excellent because it is very effectively managed and supported. Pupils gain confidence and self-esteem as a result of the school's outstanding care and support for their individual needs. They have a good understanding about keeping healthy, staying safe and the importance of physical exercise. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. This is reflected by their excellent attendance, enthusiasm, and involvement in school activities, including sporting, drama and musical events. Relationships with each other and staff are outstanding and pupils have the confidence to relate any concerns they may have. A parent reported, 'My daughter enjoys going to school and college and has made vast improvements since she started. Her increased confidence is due to the help and support of all the staff'. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their community through a variety of fund-raising events, enterprise projects, through the work of the school council, and by helping and supporting each other. Pupil views are promoted globally through the school's international status and its outstanding links with schools in Africa, Russia and Sri Lanka.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Excellent relationships help pupils gain the confidence to do their best. A parent said, 'The school is very good at educating my son. The quality of teaching is extremely good and he is achieving his set targets'. Lessons are planned effectively to meet the wide and varied learning needs of the pupils. This results in pupils making excellent progress in lessons. The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning and leaders give excellent support and guidance to ensure that the high standards of teaching and learning are maintained. Information on pupils' progress is used effectively in lesson planning and each pupil's targets provide appropriate challenges. Ongoing feedback and support in lessons by teachers and very effective learning support assistants make it very clear to pupils how they can improve. Excellent teamwork, close observation of pupils' needs, and good use of resources, ensures all pupils get the very best out of all their learning opportunities.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum is extremely well planned. This ensures that as new pupils' needs varies from year to year, the curriculum is meticulously reviewed, adapted and kept highly relevant. As a result, all pupils, including those with profound learning difficulties and disabilities are fully engaged in all learning activities. The excellent opportunities to enrich learning include an outstanding link to a similar school in Novgorod, Russia. Exchange school visits took place and activities were well supported by a Russian pupil acting as translator. Such excellent opportunities greatly enhance academic and personal development and make an outstanding contribution

to pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the wider world around them. Opportunities to gain appropriate accreditation and take part in an excellent programme of work related activities considerably improves pupils' vocational skills and effectively helps to prepare them for life after school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. Practices and procedures are clearly understood by all staff and ensure pupils are kept safe and secure. There is excellent teamwork between teachers, learning support assistants, nurse, therapists and behaviour support manager. The very effective partnerships with external support agencies, ensures all pupils' needs are effectively met. Parents know the school gives their children's care and support the highest priority. One parent wrote, 'We feel that our daughter's education, safety and well-being is of an extremely high standard and her needs are being met through support and dedication'. Pupils' progress and personal development is monitored and recorded very effectively. College placements are very carefully planned so that students are confident and well prepared for a smooth transition. The school's website is outstanding and has an emphasis on effective up-to-date information and the celebration of pupils' achievements.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding and the headteacher leads by excellent example. This is clearly demonstrated in her own teaching and the dedication she shows to the care and support of the pupils. Through its regular monitoring, the leadership team gives positive encouragement and guidance to all staff. Leadership roles and responsibilities are clear and there are high expectations made of all staff. The work done by all staff is valued and consequently, their morale is high. The impact of everyone's work is clearly seen in the outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils, which in turn leads to their outstanding personal development and achievement. The school is aware of the shortcomings of the outdoor play space for Reception children and development planning contains proposed actions for improvement. Staff induction and support arrangements are outstanding. This means all staff are clear on how to provide the best care, support and learning opportunities for all pupils. Training and professional development is clearly based upon the school's priorities for improvement, the changing needs of pupils in particular. Learning support assistants have a range of responsibilities and very effectively contribute to pupils' achievement and well-being. A parent summed up the feelings of many when she said, 'I have always had help and support with any issues that may arise. I could not ask for more'.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Breakspeare School, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, WD5 0BU

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and a special thank you to the school council who told us all about the school and their experiences. We agree with you and your parents/carers; your school is outstanding and very effectively supports you, enabling you to make excellent progress. You know how important it is to help each other and you must try to always remember what you have learned about keeping safe and healthy.

We particularly liked the following things about your school.

- All staff care about your progress; they listen and treat you with respect.
- Relationships are excellent and you really enjoy your learning.
- You know how to be safe and healthy and you feel secure while at school.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- You get outstanding support and guidance and excellent teaching helps to prepare you very well for when you leave the school.
- The curriculum is interesting and relevant to your needs and you have exciting links with other international schools.
- Staff work as an effective team and puts your care and personal needs first and you are encouraged to achieve as well as you can.
- The school works extremely well in partnership with the others to support you.
- The school has a brilliant web site.
- The school knows how to make itself even better.

The school knows it can improve even further by:

- ensuring the outdoor play space for Reception children fully supports their physical development

Thank you once again for being so friendly and we wish you all every future success.

Best wishes

Mike Smith

Lead inspector