

# Dysart School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102623
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kingston Upon Thames
<b>Inspection number</b>	323667
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Greg Sorrell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	65
Sixth form	13
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Val Reading
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Stephanie James
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	190 Ewell Road Surbiton KT6 6HL
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8412 2600
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8412 2700

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<b>Age group</b>	4–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Dysart is a community special school for 65 children. There are two children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 10 students in the post-16 provision. The learners have a wide range of learning disabilities. However, most prime needs identified on their statements of special educational needs are autistic spectrum disorder or severe learning difficulties. Due to local authority reorganisation of the provision for special educational needs, and greater inclusion of learners with special education needs in mainstream schools, the school no longer admits learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties. However, several such learners remain on roll.

Approximately two thirds of learners have autistic spectrum disorder and the remainder have severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils have significant additional difficulties, including health needs which impact upon their achievement. The cultures of pupils are diverse, with just over half being White British and the rest coming from 18 different ethnic backgrounds, the majority of whom have an Asian heritage. Twenty-five per cent of all learners speak English as an additional language, with 10 home languages represented. The majority of learners have considerable multi-agency family support, including social and health services. Approximately 25% are looked-after children. The school is part of a local network, which includes mainstream schools, and it also provides outreach support to local schools. The school has had to cope with recent shortages in nursing provision which were beyond its control.

It has gained the Healthy School Award. An after-school activities club, not managed by the governors, is available for all pupils who have working parents. The school will have a new headteacher starting in September 2009.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Dysart is an outstanding school where all staff continually strive to improve the provision for the learners. Because of their learning difficulties, the standards reached by pupils in most cases are exceptionally low, but learners do very well in their studies and many make outstanding progress. They also make excellent progress in their personal development and gain an appropriate awareness of how to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave well. They respond very well to the school's ethos of high expectations both of itself and of the community it serves. The excellent relationships that learners and their parents and carers have with the school reflect their unanimous, great satisfaction with the school's provision. Many parents and carers acknowledge the determination of staff to maintain levels of care despite recent shortages that were beyond their control. One comment was typical of their view, 'Dysart is a beacon that shines brightly.'

The quality of teaching is excellent. Learners enjoy their lessons and respond well to the lessons, which are relevant, and to approaches employed by staff. Teachers plan their lessons very well and the well-trained teaching assistants provide a high level of individual support. Some teaching assistants have higher-level qualifications that enable them to offer specialist support, for example in outdoor pursuits and speech and language therapy. The school's monitoring and tracking of learners' individual achievement is comprehensive and ensures that most are consistently challenged to make excellent progress. Senior leaders are researching the adoption of computer-assisted data analysis to make it easier to gain a view of whole-school achievement.

The curriculum is outstanding because it has a highly appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy, communication and personal development. Locally, the school is held in high regard by the community it serves, including the local authority. It offers a valuable consultancy and outreach service to mainstream schools. Older pupils make excellent gains in their level of maturity and self-confidence, helped by visits to the community, work-related learning and residential experiences. In this way, they are very well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their lives. The school has developed good relationships with local colleges of further education and the vast majority of learners continue their education when they leave school.

The quality of care, guidance and support offered to the learners is outstanding. Excellent links with a range of therapists and health personnel ensure that pupils' and families' needs receive very sensitive and consistent support. High-quality written reports for statutory reviews are the norm, although a minority of end-of-year reports do not reflect the full range of pupils' achievement.

Exceptional leadership and management have driven the impressive progress in a school which was already judged to be good, with outstanding aspects, in the previous inspection. The headteacher's work has been outstanding over a sustained period in maintaining and improving standards. A very able deputy headteacher and senior leadership team support improvements very well. Application for specialist school status is on hold, pending the arrival of a new headteacher next term. The track record of remaining leaders indicates that the capacity for further improvement is good. The governors provide excellent support in matters relating to premises, finance and personnel. However, their monitoring role is under-emphasised in the current school development plan, particularly in relation to achievement.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Students make outstanding progress in their personal development because of well-organised opportunities to experience adult life, which prepares them very well for the next stage. Staff work very well as a team and provide an age-appropriate ethos within the new accommodation. The management of the provision is outstanding. Students of all abilities make excellent progress. The students achieve very well in literacy, numeracy and communication skills. They make very good progress in the development of their independence and in work-related learning skills, which contributes substantially to their self-confidence. Much of their achievement is recognised through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Residential school journeys and work-related learning enrich the good curriculum considerably. Staff are aware that the wider forms of accreditation are appropriate in order to match the differing interests and abilities of all students more closely, for example, where particular strengths are evident in art. They have appropriate plans to improve the situation. The school is discerning about external provision and has good links with a college of further education and other providers serving students. As a result of high-quality support and guidance, the transition arrangements for leaving school are outstanding.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

At the time of the inspection, there were only two full-time children of Early Years Foundation Stage age, who were taught alongside pupils in Key Stage 1. This arrangement does not adversely affect the experiences provided for them. It ensures a smooth transition from one stage to the next. Visits to the local children's centre enable staff to know the children before they arrive and phased induction ensures they settle in well. The staff who work with Early Years Foundation Stage children are fully trained for the age range and for their complexity of needs. Planning for all strands of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework is fully in place. The learning environment is secure, physically comfortable and incorporates good play facilities both indoors and outside. Learning is very well organised and planned; for example, there is a strong focus on promoting communication skills and personal development. There is also a good balance between opportunities for independent and for guided learning. Lessons are well staffed and, typically, engage the children in fun activities that make use of their senses to maximise learning, for example, singing familiar songs to develop counting skills as 'sausages' fly out the pan one by one. Children also learn to make choices and take turns. They make good use of pictures and symbols to communicate their responses and recognise different activities on their visual timetables. Staff have very strong links with parents and carers, which helps them to gain as full a picture as possible of the children's needs and interests and thus plan learning accordingly. Strong leadership and management ensure that all staff record and share information about children so that their individual needs are extremely well known to all. Arrangements to safeguard the children's welfare at all times are excellent.

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

- Extend the analysis of individuals' achievement to improve the school's knowledge of its effectiveness.
- Ensure the monitoring role of governors is fully identified in school development planning.
- Widen the range of accreditation in the sixth form.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

All the learners achieve well and many make outstanding progress, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and students in the post-16 provision. Their attainment, however, remains considerably lower than that expected in mainstream schools because of the nature of their learning difficulties. The comprehensive support for pupils' complex needs, including high-quality teaching, enables the pupils to make excellent progress. The assessment and tracking of pupils' achievements in the acquisition of basic skills and personal development are well established and have a significant impact on their progress. In their individual education plans, the pupils consistently meet focused academic and personal development targets, which challenge them to do their best. Where it is evident that any pupil's progress requires a different provision, this is actively sought. Older pupils and students gain suitable accreditation through the ASDAN. Modules studied include 'Making Choices', 'Moving Forward' and 'Feeling Good'.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The learners enjoy the benefits of the school's commitment and recognition as a healthy school. They respond well to encouragement to maintain a healthy lifestyle in relation to diet and exercise. The majority of pupils are able to make choices about what to eat and where to sit. Lunchtimes in the dining room and snack-times in classrooms are, invariably, social occasions when pupils relate well to staff and increasingly to their peers. Relationships are very positive and many show a keen awareness of the needs of others; for example, consideration is given to those whose mobility requires additional equipment to get around. Due care is shown in corridors and all other areas, particularly when entering school from the busy car park at the start of the day.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are given many opportunities to be sociable and helpful. Some pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school and readily offer guided tours of their classroom. On arrival, it is evident that the vast majority are pleased to be at school, a view unanimously endorsed by parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. In lessons, they show very good attitudes to learning, especially where the activities are fun and promote first-hand experience. Learners with the most profound special educational needs communicate their likes, dislikes and preferences with a range of gestures, including eye contact. Skilled staff identify the meaning within this communication and ensure that their wishes are respected.

Learners' contribution to the school and wider community is exceptional. Responsibilities are readily taken up where appropriate, for example running the school cafe as a mini-enterprise and making lunch for the staff. Learners elect to share profits from the latter venture with local and national charities. Performances in school productions and hosting art exhibitions enable them to make a strong contribution to community cohesion. The learning mentor initiative with mainstream peers is mutually beneficial and also strengthens the community's awareness of disability. Any challenging behaviour is solely a result of their learning difficulties and is well managed to minimise disruption to learning. Learners' excellent progress in acquiring social, communication and self-help skills prepares them extremely well for their future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teachers' management of their classrooms and use of time are excellent. They are most ably supported by classroom assistants in their careful observation of pupils and assessment of the progress they make. Consequently, they know their pupils very well. Many pupils are difficult to engage. However, staff are highly skilled in finding the best ways to help them to learn. For those who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, teachers plan excellent activities that engage all of their senses. For those with autistic spectrum disorder, this approach is appropriately modified to take account of their preferred learning style and known aversions. Staff are conscious of the importance of routine for many learners. Therefore, they are well prepared and do their best to provide consistency in learning. They also provide new challenges to widen experiences for those learners who accept change more readily. Throughout the school, staff make excellent use of a variety of communication systems, including pictures and symbols. Regular praise and feedback encourage pupils towards their next steps in learning. All staff have good behaviour management skills, such as de-escalation and positive reinforcement, to manage pupils with challenging behaviour. Staff are very well supported by in-house technical assistance to ensure that communication aids and other hardware are in serviceable condition for the benefit of pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum design, called the Dysart Learning Pathways, is well matched to the individual needs of learners. Within the whole-school curriculum, each pupil has an individual plan that sets out very clearly his or her next steps in learning. Work on the subjects of the curriculum is presented through areas of learning, with a strong focus on literacy, numeracy, and personal, social and health education. Well-planned topics and seasonal themes embrace all areas of the National Curriculum. All activities enable the pupils to improve their communication, social and self-help skills.

The curriculum most appropriately reflects the complex needs of its learners, for example, the sensory approach for some and highly structured experiences for others. For many learners, therapies form an integral part of their curriculum, for example hydrotherapy, physiotherapy, music, and speech and language. There is very good provision to promote community cohesion through learners' involvement with other schools. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a broad range of visiting musicians and performers, by visits to the theatre and concerts and by residential visits. Age-appropriate opportunities are provided for work-related learning in a range of carefully selected settings and this helps prepare learners for life after school. The after-school club is extremely popular and regularly over-subscribed. Many learners and their families benefit from weekend access to the swimming pool.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The welfare of the learners receives the highest priority. The staff manage their personal care needs with a minimum of fuss and maximum regard for their wishes and dignity. Child protection

procedures are well established and regularly reviewed. Appropriate supervision, in-depth knowledge of the learners and risk assessments ensure that they are extended within safe limits.

Leaders and managers are relentless in their pursuit of the best multi-agency support for learners and their families. There is excellent liaison with other agencies to ensure that their medical, therapeutic and social needs are met. A recent innovative pilot project to focus intensive specialist support on specific learners has resulted in tangible benefits for them and their families. Parents agree that the school's care, guidance and support are excellent. Many provided written comments, including, 'The school includes me in all discussion and decisions about my child at this painful time...they go the extra mile not just for my child but also for us at home...we are buoyed up by their positive attitude.' A number of school staff have additional specialist training which is used to good effect, for example, as speech and language therapy assistants.

School procedures are very good with regard to learners' statements of special educational needs and those who are looked after. Reports and assessments provide an accurate picture of how well the provision meets the changing needs of the learners. On rare occasions, end-of-year reports for some do not match the high quality of the best-written reports or adequately reflect the diversity of outcomes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher leads the school very well, and improvement since the last inspection has been very effective, particularly in monitoring the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to inform lesson planning. The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve it further. This includes a secure understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. Joint lesson observations and other information provided by the school indicate that senior leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching throughout the school are accurate. They have a very good knowledge of all pupils' academic progress and personal development. They recognise that even better use could be made of this knowledge by extending the analysis of data to provide a whole-school evaluation of achievement that could be shared with governors. The governing body has a highly relevant set of skills to support the work of the school and their expertise is well deployed. The school sets itself challenging targets and the school development plan is a comprehensive and useful vehicle to drive improvement. However, the governors' monitoring role is under-emphasised in the recently adopted format for school development planning. As part of its exceptional promotion of community cohesion, a member of school staff also helps other schools within the authority to be more inclusive. Regular opportunities are also provided for learners with special educational needs from other schools to join in classes.

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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	1	
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1	
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1	
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1	
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1	
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1	

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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/or disabilities make progress	1	

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

## 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	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dysart School, Surbiton, KT6 6HL

Earlier this week, I came to the school to see how you were getting on and to look at whether I could suggest anything to make the school better. Thank you very much for your warm welcome. I enjoyed meeting you, the staff and some governors. I could see how much you enjoy being at this outstanding school and all parents and carers agree. I liked many things and would like to share some of my thoughts with you.

- You try your best and make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development.
- The many different people at the school look after you very well.
- There is an excellent range of activities, including those that help you become independent and make wise choices.
- You receive excellent teaching and your teachers and other staff are very good at recording the excellent progress you make. This helps them to prepare interesting work for each of you.
- Your school is extremely well run by your headteacher, who is very well supported by everyone else.

There are a few things that would help the school to improve even more.

- Make even better use of what teachers know.
- Make sure the work done by governors is easy for all to see.
- See that you get as many awards as your abilities deserve, especially the older learners.

Good luck with everything and keep up your excellent work!

Yours faithfully

Greg Sorrell

Lead Inspector