

Richard Cloudesley PH School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100467
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	335547
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Elizabeth Bull

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eve Smith
Headteacher	Anne Corbett
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed and 13 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of pupils' progress, teachers' planning, the school's self-evaluation and development planning and safeguarding documentation. Inspectors analysed 19 questionnaires from parents and carers, 15 from pupils and 37 from staff.

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

- the evidence that leads the school to consider that pupils' progress is outstanding
- whether the school's efforts to raise achievement in underachieving groups including boys and those with complex needs are having a distinct impact
- the effectiveness of the school's work to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in securing further improvement since the last inspection.

Information about the school

Richard Cloudesley is a special school for pupils with a statement of special educational needs for physical and associated medical difficulties, and language, communication and learning difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils experience long periods of illness and long stays in hospital. The school attracts pupils from a wide geographical area and pupils come from a number of boroughs within London. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the percentage from minority ethnic backgrounds, most of whom speak English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, the primary department has moved to the Golden Lane Campus and the school is in a soft federation with Prior Weston School and Children's Centre.

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

Richard Cloudesley is an outstanding school. Almost all parents and carers express a very high level of satisfaction with the school, describing it as 'excellent for communication' and 'parents and parents' views are always welcome'. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given an excellent start in their learning and this is sustained throughout the school and into the sixth form. The school has sustained and built on the outstanding quality found at its last inspection because the headteacher, senior leaders and governors are passionate about making the school as good as possible for the pupils. Because of extremely accurate self-evaluation, leaders are very clear about the school's strengths and those areas where aspects of its work could be refined. These factors combined mean that it has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

The school is a happy place, with a warm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school a great deal and feel safe. They make exceptionally good progress in lessons because the excellent teaching and outstanding curriculum provide a wide range of learning experiences that are carefully adapted to pupils' individual needs. Seamless working between teachers, teaching assistants and other professional agencies ensures that pupils receive exactly the right care, support and guidance, and enables them to achieve exceptionally well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with a very nurturing environment and daily activities are well planned to meet children's needs; however, as outdoor play activities are planned daily, this limits opportunities for child-initiated play and exploration.

The school's detailed analysis of pupils' progress identified that boys did marginally less well than girls and a number of successful initiatives have been introduced to promote boys' learning. The school also recognised the need further to develop its assessment systems for its pupils with the most complex needs. These initiatives have resulted in improved provision and, as a result, all pupils including boys and those with the most complex needs make outstanding progress.

The school has recently developed its own Managed Learning Environment (MLE), to support communication across the school. This is proving an exciting way to engage and empower pupils to gain knowledge and acquire new skills. This contributes extensively to pupils' personal development and well-being and enhances the quality of their learning experience, successfully supporting their transition through the school and onwards when they leave. The school recognises the need to extend its new technologies to support parental involvement and to develop links with other communities and schools.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in Early Years Foundation Stage by making further enhancements to the outdoor provision, focusing on extending opportunities for child-initiated play and improving the quality of children's movement.
- Extend the use of new technologies in order to add new dimensions to
 - the school's outreach work
 - the school's engagement with parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' outcomes have improved despite the greater complexity of the special educational needs and/or disabilities of the school's intake. Pupils meet a very high proportion of the challenging targets set for them and individual educational plans are used exceptionally well to support pupils' very good learning. Learning is highly individualised, with all pupils having specific targets for their personal, communication and cognitive development. Rigorous assessment and carefully drafted targets support and enable outstanding progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school does much to promote pupils' self-esteem, ensuring that they feel highly valued as individuals. Pupils respond really well to sensitive intervention from adults. As a result, a calm and positive atmosphere is the norm in lessons. Because of highly effective care plans, pupils are enabled to eat healthily and to participate in a wide range of physical activities, including boxing, hydrotherapy and horse-riding. The school's work in this respect has been recognised by Healthy Schools status and Sportsmark awards. Attendance is good, and there is minimal unauthorised absence. Authorised absence is as a result of serious medical conditions and the need for constant treatment, which affects the school's overall attendance figures. Most pupils will be dependent on other adults for the rest of their lives. However, the progress that pupils make prepares them very effectively for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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.

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is outstanding. Teachers have an excellent understanding of pupils' individual needs and use this knowledge exceptionally well in their planning. Lesson plans identify a range of different learning objectives for each pupil, reflecting the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers are highly skilled at capturing pupils' interests and keeping them focused through a strong emphasis on clearly structured, practical activities based on a multi-sensory approach. This maximises pupils' involvement in learning and instils a real joy in communicating. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers make exceptionally good use of the highly skilled teaching assistants, who contribute significantly to pupils' progress. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been effective in raising standards and, while teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, the vast majority of lessons are good or better.

The school places very good emphasis on developing pupils' personal development and independence skills through regular integration with mainstream peers and links with outside agencies. Learning is enriched extremely well by a wide range of additional activities including themed days, special events such as 'International week', musical and dramatic performances. The school makes exceptionally good use of the support provided by a range of other professionals in meeting pupils' needs and there is extensive liaison with members of the therapeutic and medical team.

Parents and carers are delighted with the way the school cares for their children; one says their child 'has really benefited from attending this school' while another comments that 'I can see enormous progress'.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's vision is shared and promoted throughout the school. The culture of high expectations for teaching and learning ensures that all pupils achieve their best. The school's sophisticated tracking procedures enable close monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress and help the school plan future strategies precisely. Staff feel valued and their professional development is a priority. The school ensures that all pupils have equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination vigilantly, which results in a strong inclusive ethos.

The governing body is effective in challenging and supporting the school in its drive for sustained improvement. Regular visits and the recent increased involvement in working parties are ensuring that governors have a better understanding of the school's work. They place great emphasis on safeguarding and check that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures are of high quality, updated regularly and permeate all aspects of the school's life. The school has undertaken a thorough audit of its contribution to community cohesion and has a clear understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its community. The school itself is a harmonious community where everyone is valued and differences are celebrated. There are very close links with the local community, and the school has established a link with a school in Brazil as well as raising funds for a number of charities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1

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	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make exceptionally good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in developing their communication skills. Teaching is outstanding; staff are very skilled at engaging children and providing them with interesting and exciting learning opportunities. The curriculum has a strong physical and sensory dimension and offers very good opportunities for learning. The learning environment is safe and nurturing; however, the outdoor play area does not provide enough stimulating and vibrant resources to encourage child-initiated play and activity choices. Observation and assessment are regular and close planning meets children's individual needs. Children are happy and quickly gain in confidence. Links with parents and carers are good; they receive daily information through the home-school diary and the school has worked hard to involve them fully in their child's assessment and learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptionally well led; improvement is continuous with regular monitoring of progress against children's targets.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

Sixth-form students are very well prepared for their futures and an increasing range of options are being identified for them when they leave the school at 19. All of the students enjoy their time in the sixth form and are very enthusiastic about the opportunities they are given. The sixth form is very well led and managed. The excellent curriculum on offer to individuals is personalised and relevant for improving levels of independence while ensuring that academic progress continues. Opportunities for transferring skills to real-life situations are strong, enabling students to take an ever increasing responsibility for themselves and their own well-being. A good example of this is the skills-based learning programme where students have the chance to visit a

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local college, residential college, training provider and day centres and to participate in vocational taster days in hair and beauty, farm skills and hotel and catering. All students leave school with a range of appropriate academic qualifications and work-related learning experiences, which ensure students are well prepared for the next step in their learning.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very supportive of the school. The inspection confirms their views. In particular, they feel their child enjoys school and are appreciative of the fact that the school keeps their child safe. The vast majority feel that the school is led and managed well and are satisfied with the experience provided for their child. Inspection findings confirm these positive comments. Where one or two parents and carers are less satisfied with aspects of the school's work, this relates mainly to the amount of therapy provided and to specific aspects of their child's progress. The school is proactive in encouraging parental involvement and a few parents and carers are beginning to use the school's MLE to interact with the school to support their child's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Richard Cloudesley 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 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 65 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	53	9	47	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	37	10	53	1	5	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	37	9	47	1	5	1	5
The teaching is good at this school	8	42	10	53	0	0	1	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	53	7	37	0	0	1	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	42	11	58	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)	10	53	8	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	42	7	37	1	5	1	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	42	11	58	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	47	10	53	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	58	7	37	0	0	1	5

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 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



15 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richard Cloudesley School, London, EC1Y 0TJ

We really enjoyed our visit to your school, seeing you having so much fun in lessons and talking to some of you. Thank you for sharing your views and making us feel so welcome. We agree with you that you go to an outstanding school.

The school has many strengths and these are some of the most important ones.

- You are very happy at school and feel safe and really well cared for.
- The teachers and other adults make learning exciting and you try very hard.
- You have plenty of opportunities to meet people from other schools and from the local area.
- Your school is really well led and everyone wants to give you the best possible experiences there.

There are only a few things that could be improved about your school. The headteacher has agreed to use computers and new technologies to try to get your parents and carers more fully involved in your learning so that they know how well you are doing and can support your school work. The school is also going to share its expertise more with other schools and build even better links so that you will have yet more opportunities to learn. For the youngest pupils the school has agreed to improve the outside play area so that you will have even more toys and games to play with.

You can help the school to improve by encouraging your parents and carers to know more about what you are doing in school and by celebrating and sharing your work on the MLE.

With every good wish for the future

Yours sincerely

Liz Bull

Lead Inspector

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