

The John Fielding Community Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120751
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358832
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Charlie Henry HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
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	44
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Herring
Headteacher	Sue Morrison
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. They observed ten lessons led by seven teachers or teaching assistants. These observations included all of the school's pupils. Meetings were held with the school council, staff and governors. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of the documentation including pupils' assessments and records, school policies and plans. They analysed 16 questionnaires completed by the older pupils, 11 by staff, and 16 by parents and carers.

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

- How were the attainment and progress of pupils analysed to ensure challenging individual targets were set?
- How effectively are the wide ranging needs of pupils met in a small school setting?
- Have the actions taken following significant changes to staffing since the last inspection been effective?

Information about the school

John Fielding School is a small special school and provides education for pupils with a wide range of needs. All pupils at the school have a statement of special educational needs or are undergoing statutory assessment. The large majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties; about a quarter have profound and multiple learning difficulties. About a quarter of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders and/or visual impairment in addition to their learning difficulties. There are twice as many boys as girls. Just over a fifth of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and four pupils are looked after. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds; about 10% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

John Fielding School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils; many aspects are good. It is an exceptionally caring school where pupils enjoy attending and learning. There have been significant improvements following substantial changes to staffing in the last couple of years. These developments have been driven by the shared commitment of the staff team and governors, and led by the determination of the headteacher for the school to reach high standards.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress. They make especially good progress in their communication and social skills. Pupils make satisfactory and often good progress as they move towards the post-16 part of the school. Pupils show great care for one another and do whatever they can to help. These aspects of progress in personal development reflect the approach of staff towards their pupils. The post-16 students achieve a range of qualifications however these do not always adequately show how much progress they have made.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with many lessons that are good. The quality of lessons has improved following the regular observations carried out by the headteacher. Teachers have responded well to the areas identified for improvement, although not always consistently so. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff know their pupils well and set challenging targets, although there is not enough ongoing monitoring of how well these targets are being met. While lesson activities are well planned, staff are not always deployed as effectively as possible. Behaviour is good although occasionally too much time is spent on ensuring it stays good, rather than on maximising opportunities for learning.

The curriculum is well designed. A particular success of the school is the flexible way in which groups have been organised to meet the wide range of pupils' needs. Significant improvements have been made to provide work-related learning for the older pupils and post-16 students.

There is good attention to safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety. Pupils feel very safe and parents and carers share this feeling that their children are very well cared for.

Although there have been setbacks caused by the changes in staffing since the last inspection the school is showing clear improvement. Self-evaluation has identified the key areas for further development and many actions are already in place to move these forward. The school is aware it needs to monitor more regularly how well pupils are achieving their targets and in addressing known areas of inconsistency in teaching. The governors provide just the right balance of support for what staff are doing and challenge to do even better. The school is in a good position to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of learning and progress made to at least good for the large majority of pupils by:
 - careful and regular tracking of the progress made towards challenging targets based on national data, with consequent intervention where progress dips
 - involving pupils in reviewing their own learning and their progress towards their targets
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in the large majority of lessons by:
 - ensuring all staff are deployed effectively in lessons to maximise learning
 - focusing teaching observations on how well pupils are learning and making progress

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Most pupils then make at least satisfactory progress in communication, literacy, mathematics and early cognitive skills as they move up through the school; many pupils make good progress. There is no discernible difference made in the progress made by boys and girls, or by pupils with different special educational needs. Similarly there are no noticeable differences in the progress made by pupils who are looked after or for whom English is an additional language. Progress for students in the post-16 class is also at least satisfactory. All post-16 students achieve a range of nationally recognised awards, however their records and portfolios do not always make it clear whether the work required for these awards is based on gaining new skills or on showing ones they already have.

In lessons, pupils are happy, enjoy their work and try hard. They make at least satisfactory progress; often they make good progress. Where they make the most progress staff make sure they always have challenging and interesting activities that are well matched to their ability. On occasions, owing to their physical conditions and disabilities, pupils feel tired but still manage to concentrate because of the support from their teachers and their teaching assistants.

Many pupils regularly represent the school in art exhibitions, dance events and as part of the choir. The school council meets weekly and is usually joined by one of the school's governors. The council puts forward good suggestions for improving the school, for example in redesigning the playground. One pupil has completed a playground leader's course. While most pupils contribute to the targets in their individual education plans they do not yet have sufficient opportunities in lessons to think about how well they are learning and how to learn more.

Pupils feel very safe indeed. They know who to talk to if they are upset and are confident that any problems will be quickly sorted out. Pupils also have a good awareness of healthy living. All pupils take part in physical exercise in school and many do additional activities, including as part of the after-school clubs. Older pupils plan and prepare healthy meals.

Pupils are well prepared for leaving school and the future. Significant improvements have been made in work-related learning since the last inspection and in ensuring the post-16

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class provides a clearer step towards leaving school. Older pupils and post-16 students gain increasing confidence and maturity and many become more independent, including in travel and by taking on responsibilities around school. Although attendance is low, almost all absences are due to illness and medical appointment requirements.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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.

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and help pupils' motivation and attitudes to learning to be as good as they are. In the best lessons adults provide clear and simple instructions about what pupils need to do; signing is consistently used. Questioning is used well in most lessons although in a few it does not help to extend what the pupils already know. Lessons are well planned with a wide variety of activities to keep pupils' interest. Assessment by staff of how well pupils are learning is effective and helps keep expectations high. Pupils are not however involved sufficiently in assessing their own learning. Teachers and their assistants work effectively as a team. Occasionally the rate of learning dips when support is not deployed well enough or when time is used to make sure pupils behave rather than make sure that they take part in learning activities.

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The curriculum is well planned and enables personalised programmes to meet the wide range of pupils' needs. Pupils learn for most of their time alongside all of the other pupils who are of a similar age. In addition there are opportunities for those who have autistic spectrum disorders or profound and multiple learning difficulties to focus even more on their communication needs. Booster classes are arranged for other pupils whose progress shows that they would benefit from an extra input. This flexibility is a particular success for such a small school. There has been significant development since the last inspection in providing work-related learning for pupils at Key Stage 4 and post-16. Almost all of these older pupils learn about the world of work, including work experiences in the community or in school. There is a wide range of after-school clubs that are well attended. The curriculum for post-16 students is satisfactory.

Staff care for pupils exceptionally well. Pupils, parents and carers comment very positively on the level of care and help that staff provide. The support provided in class is targeted effectively, although there are a few occasions where opportunities to enhance learning are not maximised. Staff undertake careful risk assessments when they plan for trips or new activities. A wide range of therapists support the school and provide valuable specialist guidance on meeting pupils' needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has provided successful leadership to the school during a period of significant staffing change since the last inspection. This drive and determination have built a shared commitment for improvement, as demonstrated in the very positive responses in the questionnaires completed by staff for inspectors. There has been an effective focus on improving teaching; areas targeted for improvement were noted by inspectors although require further embedding to become fully consistent. Pupils' progress has been carefully analysed and challenging targets are set. This analysis looks closely at different groups of pupils within the school and is increasingly using national data to improve the school's self-evaluation. Senior leaders are aware of the need for more frequent monitoring of how well pupils are achieving these targets so that any dips can be identified and any necessary actions taken. The school works very well with parents and carers and they hold the school in high regard. The views of pupils, parents and carers are routinely sought and contribute to school improvement. The school similarly works well with other schools and the community to extend opportunities for pupils.

The governors are very enthusiastic and committed supporters of the school. They discharge their duties well. Governors regularly visit during the school day and report back

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to the full governing body. The school's records demonstrate that all required staff recruitment checks take place and that appropriate staff training on safeguarding takes place regularly.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make good progress. Confidence quickly grows when they join the school and, as a result, their ability to make choices and to learn independently flourishes and they show increased awareness of one another. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing their language and communication skills and these aspects of learning develop very well.

Staff keep their expectations high. They know the children very well and effectively assess how well they are learning in both planned and free play activities. There is effective planning of activities for these children alongside those for the Key Stage 1 pupils who are in the same class. Occasionally the more formal activities for the older pupils limit the opportunities to play and explore and, therefore, 'choice sessions' have been added to the timetable to provide extra times when the children can learn independently. The children enjoy and have most fun in these sessions.

Good support to parents and carers can be seen in the transition arrangements as children start at the school, the regular communication between home and school, and in the quality of support provided if a child is ill. Welfare requirements are met and there are effective partnerships with medical and other specialists. The key stage leader has good plans to improve the provision still further.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Sixth form

There have been significant improvements made to the post-16 provision since the last inspection. The relationship between students and staff and the separation of classrooms from the main school building provide a distinct and more independent environment. This provides an effective step towards leaving school.

Students make at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress. They work hard towards achieving nationally recognised awards. However the lack of baseline assessment information for these achievements does not make it clear to what extent they gain new skills and understanding and how much they repeat things that they already know and can do. Teaching is at least satisfactory and students respond well to the more mature approach. Students are enthusiastic and help one another whenever they can. Many parts of lessons challenge students well, however too often students undertake activities well within what they can already do and this slows their progress. Most students visit college each week giving them a good taste of areas such as office skills, childcare, hair and beauty and construction that they may choose to continue after they leave school. Almost all students carry out work experience either in the local community or within school.

The Connexions adviser provides valuable support for students and their parents and carers as they look towards leaving school; the adviser has a good understanding of local opportunities and those in specialist colleges further afield. The new sixth form leader has good ideas about developing the provision using the new Foundation Learning and has already made some improvements in what students learn.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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Views of parents and carers

The views of parents and carers largely match the findings of the inspectors. All parents and carers are happy with their experience of the school and that it meets the needs of their children. One parent commented that 'the school goes above and beyond to help our child's needs'. This parent continued to say their child had become more independent, confident and outgoing, and was able to communicate more and was therefore less frustrated. Another parent said that they realised from their son's behaviour at home that his days at school were good. All of the parents and carers think their children enjoy school and that it is a caring and safe place for them to be. They also feel their children are making good progress and that they are kept well informed about how well they are doing. Parents and carers are positive too about the quality of teaching and the support they are given to help their children learn. They consider that behaviour is generally dealt with effectively. Parents and carers feel the school is well led and managed and that their suggestions and concerns are taken into account.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The John Fielding Community Special 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 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	75	4	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	75	4	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	56	7	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	69	4	25	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)	8	50	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	56	7	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	63	5	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	75	4	25	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). 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"> ■ 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 pupils' 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.



10 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of the John Fielding School

Lucie and I really enjoyed the time we spent at your school seeing all of the things that you do.

We want to say 'thank you' to all of you and especially to the school council for telling us all about your school.

Here are some of the good things that we found out about John Fielding School:

- you really like school
- you learn lots of new things
- you help one another when you can and behave well
- everyone at school takes care of you very well.

Mrs Morrison and all of the staff are working hard to make your school good. Here are a few things we have asked them to do to make your school even better:

- look carefully at how well you are meeting your targets so that they can help you quickly if they need to
- ask you about how well you are learning and how you can do even better
- make sure all of the adults are helping you to learn as much as possible
- look carefully at how well you are learning to see if this can be improved.

You can help them by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Charlie Henry

Her Majesty's Inspector

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