

Paternoster School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115824
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357823
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Arnold
Headteacher	Ms Julie Mantell
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed six lessons and six teachers. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of the school's data on pupils' performance, personal development and behaviour records, the curriculum and minutes and proceedings of the school's governing body. The inspector looked at 20 parent and carer questionnaires, 13 pupil questionnaires and 34 staff questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The rate of all pupils' progress to establish whether there are differences between different age groups and between pupils with differing learning difficulties.
- The quality of outcomes in the pupils' personal skills, particularly communication, physical and self-help skills.
- How well assessment informs the targets for individual pupils and how well the curriculum is adapted to their learning needs.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in their monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and their effectiveness in taking action to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum.

Information about the school

The school provides for pupils with severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Currently there is not a sixth form. There is an increasing number of pupils with challenging autistic spectrum conditions. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and currently no pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils come to the school from a wide area and an increasing number come from out of the county. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

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

2

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. There has been sustained improvement since the previous inspection when the school was judged good. The pupils greatly enjoy their learning and parents and carers are very happy for their children to attend. One parent commented that the school provides a, 'secure, nurturing and friendly environment'. The quality of care and support for pupils is outstanding. The pupils attend regularly and their behaviour is excellent.

The pupils make good progress in their learning. They make excellent progress in nearly every aspect of their personal development. The school keeps comprehensive records of pupils' achievement. This information is rigorously analysed and used effectively to ensure all pupils are challenged and supported to do their best. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this rate of progress continues for pupils as they move through the school.

Teaching is good throughout. Teachers plan and deliver interesting lessons. Pupils receive a high degree of individual tuition and support from teachers and the competent learning assistants. This enables each pupil, no matter what their learning needs, to gain confidence and make good progress. As a result, the pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to their learning. Teachers and other adults keep excellent records of the progress each pupil makes in lessons. Teachers, however, do not always use this information consistently to adapt their lessons to create the precise targets which would enable pupils quickly to take the next little step. This can slow down the pace of learning.

The curriculum is outstanding and has been significantly revised and improved since the previous inspection. It is carefully adapted to the needs of the pupils. Teachers have developed substantial expertise in providing for the needs of pupils with complex learning difficulties. Pupils with autism and with profound and multiple difficulties are thus effectively supported to achieve equally well. This has resulted in the good progress of all pupils irrespective of their disability. In the last two years of their education, pupils follow courses which can lead to qualifications on a variety of levels. Although the complex learning difficulties of most pupils mean that it is inappropriate to compare their attainment with national expectations, a minority of pupils gain Entry Level passes while most pupils gain a range of other accreditation.

The headteacher has driven these improvements through her determination to provide the best for the pupils. She has been well supported by her senior team. Governance of the school is good. The governing body investigates and evaluates each aspect of provision and challenges the senior team to improve attainment. However, subject coordinators do not have the time to fully monitor and support colleagues in improving attainment in their subject. The school reviews its practice and the effect on pupils in procedures which involve all staff and the governing body. This leads to a culture of improvement which is

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accepted and valued by staff. As a result, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement and provides excellent value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve assessment procedures to ensure teachers consistently use the day-to-day recording of pupils' progress to:
 - adapt learning activities to build on the small steps in progress which the pupils make
 - create precise learning targets which are more regularly reviewed.
- Ensure the effectiveness of subject coordinators in monitoring and improving standards of teaching and learning in the subjects for which they are responsible.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils maintain good progress in basic skills throughout the school. The school's data and scrutiny of pupils' work show that there are no significant differences in the pupils' progress. The attainment of most pupils remains very low throughout their time in the school. By Year 11, however, most pupils gain Entry Level or qualifications that are more basic. Those with complex learning needs make good progress through the strong support and skilled teaching they receive. As a result of good teaching and rigorous analysis of the pupils' performance, there are no groups of pupils or individuals who are allowed to fall behind. This was illustrated in a primary English lesson where pupils of widely differing abilities and in some cases with severely challenging autistic conditions worked together happily and at their own level in writing letters in foam which had been sprayed on the tables. The teacher and teaching assistants secured their achievement as they worked extensively with each individual pupil to practise the letters. At the same time, an autistic pupil with very challenging behaviour problems worked with an adult who sensitively helped him to express his feelings using a symbolic communication system.

Pupils feel very safe and well cared for. This was fully confirmed by parents and carers. There are relaxed and friendly relationships throughout the school, which has a positive influence on the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils develop a very strong commitment to staying healthy. The school has gained the national Healthy Schools award and is currently working towards advanced status. The pupils enjoy the many opportunities for physical activity, such as in lunchtime clubs and sport played against other schools. There is a vibrant school council which has been instrumental in helping rewrite the anti-bullying policy. Members meet with the council members of other schools. Older pupils gladly take on responsibilities, such as emptying and filling the dishwasher. Pupils reach out into the local community through partnerships with other schools and projects, such as supporting restoration of the historic town hall. The pupils' good progress in basic skills, their above-average attendance and their developing experience of work-related learning mean they are well prepared for leaving school. All the leavers, for instance, in recent years have secured college places.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is outstanding. They are patient and understanding of other children's disabilities. They gain valuable experience of a wide range of cultural activities. For instance, they look forward each year to the multicultural

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'Arts Week' and 'International Week' and they join with a nearby primary school in working with a professional theatre company. The school sponsors art exhibitions of pupils' work at the local gallery.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Teachers plan interesting and lively lessons and in the best examples set clear learning objectives for each pupil in individual education plans. The excellent recording of pupils' progress in each lesson is not always, however, used to best advantage in creating precise short-term targets which build on each small step in the pupils' progress. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. Classrooms are happy places where pupils enjoy well-organised lessons taught at a suitably brisk pace. Teaching assistants, who are well trained in supporting pupils with complex needs, give effective support. Because of this, the pupils feel confident to learn new things. They maintain good levels of concentration and their behaviour makes a very strong contribution to their good learning.

The curriculum is outstanding in providing balanced experiences that reflect the individual needs of pupils and ensures a firm focus on developing personal skills. There is a wide range of interventions which are personalised to meet the identified needs of pupils with

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complex learning difficulties. These pupils, where appropriate, follow their own tailor-made curriculum designed to promote their strengths and meet their additional needs. These effectively support pupils' basic skills, communication and independence skills as well as helping them to develop their understanding of acceptable behaviour and social interaction. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of visiting artists and performers, as well as by the work of speech and language and occupational therapists. Pupils experience many trips, including residential visits. This adds greatly to their social and cultural understanding in a variety of situations.

Care, support and guidance are of a very high quality and a strength of the school. Pupils have full confidence in adults and the quality of safeguarding is outstanding. Pupils and parents and carers perceive that the school is calm and secure. Vulnerable pupils with complex needs are particularly well cared for. Staff effectively provide physical care where needed and provide outstanding support for pupils with autism and profound and complex difficulties. Attendance is very well monitored. There has been year-on-year improvement and attendance rates are above average. A home?school worker provides a valued link with parents and carers. When pupils get ready to leave the school, they receive very good guidance and the school ensures that every pupil has an established pathway into further education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 senior team has been very diligent in monitoring, evaluating and improving provision. Leaders prepare clear and focused development planning to which all staff and the governing body contribute. The work of teachers is regularly monitored and because of this, the quality of teaching is good and continually improving. Leaders are taking effective steps, for instance, in the quality of target setting for pupils. They are aware that the role of subject coordinators is not developed sufficiently to further ensure consistency in teaching quality. Pupils of all ages and abilities get a 'good deal' and equality of opportunity, because of the school's determination to continually improve provision for every pupil. The governing body contributes effectively to the work and direction of the school. Members monitor all aspects of the school's work on a regular annual cycle. The governing body ensures that child protection procedures, risk assessments and the necessary checks on staff are of a very high standard. Parents and carers report that they feel fully confident in the school's work. They are very well informed about the school and their child's progress. The school works in very effective partnerships with other schools and institutions. There are curriculum, sporting and artistic links with both special and mainstream schools and good relationships with local colleges. The school has created

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good provision to help pupils develop their understanding of community cohesion. There are strong local links and the pupils are developing their understanding of the wider cultural, ethnic and religious differences in other countries. There are, however, gaps in the pupils' awareness of the diversity of people and customs in the United Kingdom today.

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	2
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	1
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
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make good and sometimes outstanding progress because of good teaching and sensitive support. They receive a very high degree of individual attention. Adults know the children very well and match their activities effectively to their learning needs. The children enjoy their education. They come in with happy smiles and they make good progress in learning to communicate, to behave well and to relate to other children and adults. Adults work in an efficient supportive team and the leadership and management of the provision are good. Although facilities for outdoor play are limited, the accommodation is spacious and the children have good opportunities to take part in a wide variety of play activities.

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	2

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Stage

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers overwhelmingly feel the school is a safe and caring place for their child. They are very happy that their child is making good progress because teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. A very small proportion expressed dissatisfaction with the progress their child was making but these concerns were not borne out by the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Paternoster 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 inspector received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 42 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	80	3	15	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	10	50	9	45	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	50	9	45	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	55	8	40	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	45	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	50	10	50	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	50	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	55	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	50	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	55	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	65	7	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	70	6	30	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



21 January 2011

Dear Pupils Inspection of Paternoster School, Cirencester, GL7 1JS

Not long ago I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you in our meeting and in the classrooms. You go to an outstanding school. Here are some things which are particularly good.

- You make good progress in your work and excellent progress in learning about how to keep safe, about a healthy lifestyle and becoming part of your community.
- You behave very well and you come to school as often as you can.
- Your lessons are interesting and you have all sorts of exciting trips and visits to look forward to and which help you to be more confident.
- You are very safe and well looked after. All the adults take great care to make sure you are happy and able to learn well.
- Your school is well run by the headteacher and her staff.

To make the school even better, I have asked the teachers to make sure they use all the information they write down about how you are getting on, to give you work which is just right to help you to improve even faster. I have asked them to check even more carefully how well you are doing in each subject.

You can help your school too by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Yours sincerely

Mel Blackband

Lead inspector

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