

Adelaide School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131558
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	360291
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Brian Padgett HMI

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeff Welch
Headteacher	Mr Lloyd Willday
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Six lessons were observed. These were led by five teachers and a higher level teaching assistant. Meetings were held with parents and carers, pupils, governors, staff and representatives of schools, colleges and agencies with which the school works in partnership. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation provided. He examined the responses to 10 returned parental questionnaires.

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

- The success with which the students overcome their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The effectiveness with which the school works with a broad range of partners.
- How well young people are prepared for their future lives.

Information about the school

The school provides for boys and girls of secondary school age with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. At present, all the students are boys of White British heritage. All students have a statement of special educational needs and about a third have additional special educational needs, including autism, specific special educational needs and attention deficit hyperactivity syndrome. Just over a half of the boys are known to be eligible for free school meals and about a quarter are in the care of the local authority, proportions that are much higher than average.

The school has many awards. These include achieving Healthy School status, the Inclusion Quality Mark and International School Award at Intermediate level. In 2010, the school was designated a Specialist Special Educational Needs College for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, the school was being re-modelled to extend its facilities for vocational education.

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

This is an outstanding special school. It takes in students who have had a very poor start to education, turns them around and helps them acquire the skills and attitudes they need for a better future. Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector made it clear they were initially opposed to their children coming to the school. They then said how pleased they were that their children had come and talked of the positive difference the school had made to their own and their children's lives. When asked what the school had done for him, one student replied, 'Everything'.

The school was judged 'outstanding' at its last inspection in 2007. Its strengths have been maintained. Teaching is good and some is outstanding. The exceptional quality of relationships between staff and students remains, as does the school's outstanding capacity to continue improving. For example, new ideas and approaches to teaching and the curriculum have evolved. The school has successfully adopted a different approach to learning in Years 7 and 8, borrowing from successful practice in primary schools and from nurture groups. This is raising students' attainment in core skills of reading, writing and mathematics, enabling them to make up lost ground. Older students benefit from increased opportunities for vocational work in construction to add to the wide range of hands-on opportunities they already have. Students enjoy active learning greatly and show considerable aptitude. Overall, they achieve outstandingly well in relation to their starting points.

The school provides a refreshing change for students used to exclusion in their mainstream schools. Students are made very welcome. The school has a very friendly ethos. On arrival, before lessons start, students often play pool with staff. Older students regard staff as friends as well as teachers. The staff's commitment to students is total. The school will not accept failure. Students make outstanding progress in dealing with the issues that prevented them from learning in the past. No student leaves without a qualification. Staff persist even for the one or two students who will not attend. The positive relationships and care extend to students as they enter college and past students frequently return to update staff on their progress.

Partnerships between the school and other schools and colleges are excellent. The school's positive influence is felt in local primary schools supporting troubled pupils and in local colleges, where its support for students is held in high regard. The school is extremely well led and managed at all levels, including governance. It is very effective in self-analysis. Planning for teaching and learning is improved and capacity for self-analysis has been advanced by the development of rigorous monitoring of data and performance since the last inspection. Lapses in a student's achievement are noted and dealt with quickly. Staff's efforts are highly valued by senior leaders and staff willingly take on extra

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responsibilities. Teamwork between staff is excellent. Each member of staff plays a full part in the care and support of students, who they know extremely well as individuals.

The school is highly effective. It makes excellent use of the public money made available to it.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The inspection identified no areas for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students arrive in Year 7 from their primary schools up to four years behind in their basic skills. Those who have academic potential have not achieved it because of their overarching behaviour, emotional or social difficulties. Others have additional special educational needs, such as dyslexia or autism, which have made learning more difficult. About a half of students arrive later, having started their secondary education in other secondary schools.

The school is highly successful in helping the students overcome their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and recover their confidence and belief in themselves. This requires time, particularly for students to re-establish trust in adults and teachers. Once trust has been established, students are keen to learn. There is a very wide range of ability among students, but they all make excellent progress from their starting points. Students favour hands-on learning and enjoy being active. As a consequence, art, sport, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and construction are popular, and this is reflected in the qualifications and accreditations students achieve and in the college courses they choose when they leave. The school is keen for students to gain qualifications. Up to 20 different qualifications were awarded in 2010, ranging from GCSEs at a good level (grade C and above) to entry-level qualifications and accreditations for achieving functional skills.

A strength of the work of the school is the success with which it prepares its students for life beyond school. Students' success in examinations is matched by their personal development and in their acquiring skills for life, such as the ability to prepare wholesome food from basic ingredients. The school is calm and orderly, and although students have problems from time to time, behaviour is generally good. In respect of managing their behaviour, students make spectacular progress. They feel very safe. There is mutual respect and consideration for staff and between students. From being excluded from opportunities for extra-curricular activities in their previous schools, students enjoy a rich experience out-of-school and in doing so, they make a very strong contribution to their local community.

Attendance is outstanding, overall. Many of the students had very poor attendance before joining Adelaide School. Parents and carers confirm that their children now enjoy school and are keen to attend. Excluding a very small number of persistent absences, the school's attendance is well above that for secondary schools nationally. For persistent absentees the school provides home support and is exceptionally flexible in working with these students and their families. This reflects one of the fundamental principles of the school never to give up on a student. The school works very closely with the local authority's education welfare service.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
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?

The school has a high ratio of staff to students and staff have time to support students' individual learning needs. This is a powerful factor in students' accelerated learning. Staff and resources are deployed exceptionally well. Teachers and support staff get to know students extremely well and are expert in helping them manage their behaviour.

The school provides an extraordinary level of care, support and guidance for students. Staff act as powerful role models for students. One visiting professional described the watchfulness of staff as 'relaxed vigilance', neatly capturing the staff's effectiveness in their constant monitoring of students' welfare. The transition of students to college and support during work experience are managed extremely well. Local colleges were clearly impressed by the school's commitment to support their students during the transition process and beyond. They are very appreciative of the good communications between themselves and the school. The school's care does not stop at the school gates. Many of the students live at a distance, travelling by taxi. They cannot easily access extra-curricular or extended services at the school so staff make arrangements with their local schools and providers on their behalf.

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The curriculum is particularly innovative. The school is very effective in personalising students' work to meet their needs and interests. The setting up and running of a radio station within the building is an excellent example of this, which, incidentally, enables students to make a contribution to the local community that is unusual for any school. Imaginative approaches are seen throughout the curriculum. The development of a vocational construction course is proving highly successful and motivating for students. Information and communication technology is widely used. In one lesson, teachers taught functional ICT skills to students through the design of a CD album cover, an activity which caught the imagination and interest of the students. The school is keen for students to improve their basic skills of literacy and numeracy, as a major key to further learning. However, this is an area where most students have failed in the past. To address this issue, the school has adapted the curriculum in Years 7 and 8 to reflect best current practice in primary schools in promoting the acquisition and application of basic skills. This is proving highly successful. Standards of reading, writing and mathematics are rising. Students' books are very well presented.

Teaching is good and outstanding teaching was seen. Planning of lessons has improved since the last inspection, as has the assessment of students' progress. Teachers know students' levels of learning to a fine degree. Lessons are well structured with clear learning objectives with an opportunity for students to evaluate the success of their learning. However, the most obvious strength of teaching lies in the exceptional relationships between staff and students. When students were asked the reason for their enjoyment of school, they always gave their first reason as 'the teachers'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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 clear vision of the headteacher is responsible for the school's excellent ethos that makes such an impact on students, staff and visitors. His approach sets the way in which students are valued and respected and for the promotion of full equality of opportunity. Leaders and managers are strong at all levels and very committed to the students. Staff are keen to take on responsibilities and contribute well to the school's improvement. The senior team is extremely well supported by a governing body rich in experience and knowledge of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities from many professional disciplines. The governing body is central in determining the strategic direction for the school and has an extremely good professional relationship with the headteacher. It meets all its statutory responsibilities and safeguarding arrangements are of good quality.

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The school has built up excellent partnerships with schools, colleges and agencies to ensure it accesses the help it needs to support students fully. The partnerships with the local authority, through the educational welfare service and education psychology, provide good examples. The partnerships do not only benefit the school. The school supports the work of primary school pupils with behaviour difficulties and secondary schools and colleges learn from the school's success with vulnerable students. The school is outward-looking on behalf of its students and is active within the community locally and at an international level. Its links with a school in Soweto in South Africa have helped challenge discrimination within its White British community and promote community cohesion very effectively.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

With a single exception, parents, carers and foster parents who responded to the questionnaire and/or who talked to the inspector were full of praise for the school. They commented particularly on the good communication between school and home and the excellent relationships between staff and students. Several parents, carers and foster parents said they had opposed their children coming to the school initially but were now very happy they had come here. Several commented that family life had improved significantly as their children had started to look forward to school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Adelaide 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 10 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 33 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	4	40	5	50	0	0	1	10
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	50	4	40	0	0	1	10
The teaching is good at this school	5	50	4	40	0	0	1	10
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	50	3	30	1	10	1	10
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	30	6	60	0	0	1	10
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)	5	50	4	40	0	0	1	10
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	60	3	30	0	0	1	10
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	40	6	60	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	60	3	30	0	0	1	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	60	3	30	0	0	1	10

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.



4 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Adelaide School, Crewe, CW1 3DT

I am writing to you to let you know the outcome of the recent inspection of your school. I spent two days in the school, finding out how well you are doing. Thank you to those students who talked to me during my visit.

I judged your school as 'outstanding', our top category. This is the second time in succession that Adelaide School has been judged so highly.

I found out that all of you have had a bad start to your education elsewhere and experienced real problems in your primary and secondary schools. However, Adelaide School sorts you out. Everything gets better for you here. By the time you are ready to leave for college or work, you have achieved useful qualifications and skills and acquired good attitudes to succeed in life. Even when you leave the school, the staff still keep in touch. They have become friends as well as teachers.

I thought the range of work you undertake was very good. When you start in Years 7 and 8 you have an excellent chance to catch up on your basic skills. From Year 9 you have opportunities to learn practical, hands-on skills such as construction, technology, art, ICT and, very important, cooking! You thrive in these lessons. Few students at secondary schools have the opportunity to beat their teachers at pool when they arrive in the morning but you do. It seems a good way to start the day!

The school has never stopped getting better. Someone described it as like Dr Who's Tardis. He said it is very different on the inside from what it looks like on the outside. I can see what he meant. It may look like an old school building from the outside but it provides top quality opportunities for learning inside. A new vocational block is being built within the courtyard. It seems as if the school's continuing development is assured.

I thought Adelaide a very special school and I am not at all surprised you are so proud of it. Mr Willday and his staff deserve our recognition for what they have achieved and for how they help you turn around your fortunes. They demonstrate unconditional commitment to you and you repay this with your success.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett,

Her Majesty's Inspector

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