

Churchill Park Complex Needs School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135119
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	360697
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Lewis

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	152
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gloria Pantling
Headteacher	Diane Whitham
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Winston Churchill Drive Fairstead, King's Lynn PE30 4RP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 24 lessons, seeing 20 teachers. Meetings were held with: representatives of the governing body; the school's leadership team; staff, including teaching assistants; groups of pupils; and some of the school's partner agencies. Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: data on pupils' progress; teachers' planning; curricular documents; pupils' files; and the school's self-evaluation. They analysed 62 returned questionnaires from parents and carers, together with 167 from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How good is teaching and learning for all pupils, including the youngest and those with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and more complex needs, and how well do staff plan to meet their different needs?
- How good are attendance and behaviour and what strategies are in place for improving these further?
- How well do the governing body, the school's leaders and middle managers all fulfil their different roles in ensuring that the school continues to improve and pupils achieve all that they should?
- How good is the provision for the youngest children and for those who have the more complex needs?

Information about the school

Churchill Park is a new, large special school for pupils with complex needs. It was formed by amalgamating two existing special schools, one for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and one for pupils with severe and more complex needs. The school will not admit pupils with MLD in the future but will specialise in providing for pupils with complex needs. There are fewer pupils than found nationally who are of a minority ethnic heritage or whose first language is not English. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and a few have joint placements, spending part of the week in mainstream schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than usual.

The accommodation is purpose built, but was not completed when the school opened in September 2009. The school operated on two sites until April 2010. The senior leadership team has had a number of challenges, mainly due to staff ill-health, since then. There was no permanent headteacher from November 2009 until December 2010. The current headteacher was seconded to the school in September 2010 and in December 2010 this appointment was made permanent. The local authority has provided considerable support, having identified the school as giving cause for concern in November 2009. A local authority project group has supported the governing body through this period. The school shares some facilities with a local primary school. This was its first inspection.

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

Churchill Park is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. Since September 2010 it has had a strong and effective leadership team who have quickly established a clear vision for the school's future and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. The school's strengths lie in the welcoming, caring and supportive atmosphere that all staff promote, together with its determination to put everything that needs to be in place to secure better learning and progress for its pupils as quickly as possible. The new leadership team has already achieved much in a very short time. For example, a good start has been made on analysing the data the school now holds about pupil progress, so that staff training and additional resources are carefully targeted to raise achievement and drive the quality of teaching and learning even higher. Teaching and learning have improved progressively since summer 2010. These are satisfactory overall; unsatisfactory teaching is now rare and good or better teaching and learning more frequent. Pupils say that they are 'learning lots'. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and feel optimistic for their future. Parents and carers are also overwhelming in their support for the school. They and the pupils say the school is 'getting better every day.'

Outcomes are satisfactory and improving. All pupils, whatever their special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory and sometimes better progress because of the level of personal support provided by teachers and teaching assistants. The school is particularly successful in actively promoting pupils' well-being and personal development through good care, support and guidance. Pupils of all ages, whenever they enter the school and whatever their learning needs, quickly feel safe and relaxed and this helps them to be ready to learn. They develop a good understanding of how to keep safe and live healthily. Behaviour is satisfactory and improving as staff become more consistent and skilled in implementing behaviour plans. All this lays the foundation for the good increases in maturity evidenced by students in the post-16 department and the growing ability of pupils throughout the school to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Attendance is average overall. A very few pupils are poor attenders or have severe medical needs that limit their attendance. The school works well with therapists and other agencies and partners to promote pupils' well-being and meet their broader needs. However, lessons in some classes are interrupted too frequently as pupils come and go for support.

Key skills such as personal and social skills, understanding of right and wrong, early reading, numeracy and scientific skills are generally developed well. This is because the learning opportunities pupils have in these areas are now better planned by most teachers. The quality of these and the teaching and learning are also more carefully monitored for their effectiveness. However, sometimes the teaching does not take sufficient account of what is known about pupils' current levels of ability and needs with the result that activities and lesson objectives are not always sufficiently adjusted to meet

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these. Staff have good informal knowledge of how pupils are doing overall, but information about how pupils are doing in every subject is not yet available. Some teachers do not consistently share with pupils what they will learn at the beginning of lessons. In other lessons there is too much teacher talk and missed opportunities to use technological and other support resources such as symbols, signs and objects that enable pupils to contribute and be more independent in their learning.

School self-evaluation is accurate and driving improvement forward through setting challenging targets and timetables for improvement. Good partnership working with other special schools, the local authority, local community groups and therapists is already strengthening learning opportunities and creating a more team-based approach to learning. Managers now have much more responsibility to monitor and lead their subjects and departments, which they do with enthusiasm and increasing rigour. All this means that the capacity of the school to improve further is good and it provides satisfactory value for money.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - all staff plan and teach lessons, that take account of what is known about pupils' current skills and understanding and what they should achieve next
 - consistent use is made by staff of technological and other aids, such as switches, signs and symbols, in all lessons to support pupils' involvement and communication and enable them to carry out tasks as independently as possible
 - lesson objectives and what pupils will learn are shared consistently with them
 - withdrawal support and therapy is organised in such a way that learning is not interrupted so frequently.
- Use and build on the data that the school now has available about pupils' achievements so that:
 - challenging targets which secure good or better progress are set for all pupils and different groups of pupils and these are carefully monitored in all subjects and for all age groups
 - teachers use this data to devise tasks for all pupils that are tailored to the next steps in their learning and have sufficient challenge.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The complexity of pupils' special educational needs and learning difficulties mean that they enter the school with skills much lower than expected nationally and it is therefore inappropriate to make judgements about their attainment compared to others of their age. However, from their various starting points pupils, including those in Early Years Foundation Stage and with the most complex needs, make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects and good progress in areas such as their personal development, the ways in

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which they join in lessons and become more sociable. Pupils develop their communication skills well, although a few could make even more progress if their different communication aids were used more consistently in all their lessons. Older pupils achieve a range of appropriate qualifications, sometimes taking GCSE awards in art and science. Students in the sixth form thrive and develop their self-help skills well as they take a range of life skills options within their Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards. All pupils respond well to the practical activities and investigations they do in subjects like science and mathematics. For example, pupils in Key Stage 3 were working out how long television programmes last or calculating how much money they might need for shopping. Others in Years 8 and 9 really try hard to pronounce words, listen well and make noticeable progress in French when they talk about family members or when practising their letters and sounds in Key Stage 2.

Pupils with more complex needs make particular improvement in their enjoyment of lessons as teachers help them to become more aware of the world around them. Pupils take pride in their work and are increasingly able to work both independently and as part of a team. They develop a keen sense of fairness and demonstrate care and concern for each other and for their environment. They help each other to move around school and take great pride in keeping it clear of litter and bright and inviting. Effective work with youth agencies, with pupils from other schools and charity and vocational work, enables pupils to contribute well to the school and other communities. All this, the improving behaviour and the strong personal, social and health education programme mean that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. Almost all teachers are ambitious for their pupils and support them very systematically towards qualifications or early number, reading and writing skills, working hard to make the learning interesting and relevant. However, sometimes lessons do not check sufficiently on pupils' learning, concentrating more on completing tasks. Teaching is strongest in the sixth form where staff are very experienced with the age group and work is very carefully tailored to next steps for each individual. In a French lesson in Key Stage 3, good use of teaching assistants, interesting resources and excellent behaviour management meant that pupils progressed well not only in their French but also towards their individual learning targets. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but is improving rapidly as its detail is being worked out. Pupils enjoy the new themed curriculum in Key Stage 3 and generally this is challenging them well. Visits and clubs excite pupils and enrich their learning, bringing it to life.

Care support and guidance is good. The ways in which the school works with other agencies to support the most vulnerable of pupils is particularly strong as are the arrangements for transition. This means that pupils transfer in and out of the school smoothly and families also feel much supported. Good partnership working with therapists

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and other agencies makes sure that pupils have the support they need for all-round development and helps keep everyone feeling safe and healthy.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has recovered from its very shaky start because of the determination of its new leadership team to unite staff and improve outcomes for all pupils. They have set themselves and pupils challenging targets and are well on the way to next steps in achieving these. Middle managers also share this vision and are working hard to monitor and improve the aspects of the school for which they are responsible. The subject leaders' role is currently being reviewed and strengthened. Teaching and learning has improved well from a low base last year and achievement is rising because of this and a more planned approach to pupils' experiences over time.

Governance is satisfactory and improving as the governing body's role has been strengthened through ongoing training. Its members are committed to school improvement, vigilant in meeting their statutory responsibilities and have advocated well for the school when it was in difficulties. The governing body's role in challenging the school itself is now developing. The school has drawn well on partnerships with other schools and the local authority to help accelerate its improvement and protect pupils' well-being. It has good and effective safeguarding procedures and is tenacious in implementing them. Good partnership working, staff training and effective use of teaching assistants help ensure that everyone has access to what the school offers and is cared for well. This ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. Relationships with parents and carers are good but the school recognises that it could engage them even more in their child's learning, particularly those who find coming into school difficult and leaders are already seeking ways of developing these relationships further. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has developed its own sense of community well and is increasingly engaged in the local community, but its work for community cohesion further afield, though planned, is in the early stages.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school makes satisfactory provision for its youngest children. The leadership and management had identified inconsistencies in this provision and it was being reorganised at the time of the inspection. New staff have been appointed and planning and record keeping are being reviewed. The strengths of the Early Years Foundation Stage are in the relationships established with children and the atmosphere of care and concern. These enable children to develop trusting relationships and tackle new experiences. All welfare requirements are met. Children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and occasionally do better. Those with the most complex needs make simple choices and join in activities more actively; others develop good early reading and counting skills. Most make good progress in their communication skills, although inconsistencies in the use of signs, symbols and switches mean that some opportunities for even swifter development are missed. The outdoor learning environment is underused other than for physical development and play. Leadership and management of the Early years Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	3

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Stage

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Sixth form

Students in the sixth form mature well in their independence and develop well in their personal social and key skills during their time there. By the time they leave, they have been well prepared for the next stages of their education and life because the sixth form courses are made very relevant to them. The provision transferred smoothly to the new school and staff were able to use their expertise in the age range and different courses such as ASDAN awards, as well as established college and community links, to ensure the provision 'hit the ground running'. Students' understanding of health lifestyles develops particularly well through the food technology, shopping, fitness and sports activities they pursue. Good work-related and enterprise activities all give the students confidence in their abilities and develop their self-help and social awareness well. Strong work with other agencies secures smooth transitions to next steps, although the strong leadership is also rightly pursuing how they can broaden the range of courses and experiences available even more.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

About 40% of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. Parents and carers feel strongly that their children are kept safe and enabled to live healthy lives. They are very appreciative of the ways in which teachers and the senior staff will 'go the extra mile' for their children and how much their children enjoy school. Several commented on how the school has improved since the new management has been in place. A very few wanted more information about their child's progress. Inspectors found that the school is already working on new materials to help families understand their child's progress more and to involve them more in their child's learning. Inspectors found the school to be improving rapidly and to provide good support for pupils' well-being.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Churchill Park Complex Needs 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 152 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	87	8	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	82	11	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	73	14	23	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	72	16	26	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	79	12	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	69	17	28	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	73	17	27	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)	27	45	27	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	74	15	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	66	19	31	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	65	20	32	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	63	20	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	76	14	23	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.



14 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Churchill Park Complex Needs School, King's Lynn, PE30 4RP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. It was good to hear how proud you are of the school and how much you think it has improved. We really enjoyed our visit and seeing how much you enjoy your lessons. These are some of the things we found out about your school. Churchill Park gives you a satisfactory education but it is improving quickly. Here are some of the good things about it.

The sixth form is good and really helps you get ready for college or whatever you will do next.

The care you receive is good so that you feel safe and trust the adults who work with you.

The school works well with different people and other schools to make sure you have all the help you need.

In some lessons, like science and mathematics, you do really interesting things that help you learn more easily.

There are some things the school could do better and so I have asked the governing body, headteacher and staff to do the following.

Make sure teaching is good or better in every classroom and that you have everything you need in lessons to help you achieve even more, such as special activities, communication aids and work that is just at the right level,

Make sure the school and the teachers look carefully at all the information it has about your learning so that you have even more opportunities to learn better.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and by coming to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis

Lead inspector

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