

Delius Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135235
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	364047
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sally Birkbeck
Headteacher	Ms Sally Joy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were observed involving eight teachers. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and an education consultant. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised a range of school documentation including that pertaining to keeping pupils safe, the assessment and analysis of pupils' progress and attendance. Thirty parental questionnaires were analysed along with other questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- The school's success in embedding the effective assessment of pupils' progress and its use in planning learning and keeping track of progress
- The extent to which school leaders are driving the improvement of teaching and learning
- The impact monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has on guiding improvement.

Information about the school

The school opened in April 2010 as a new special school following the local authority's reorganisation of its special school provision. The school is in a new building which shares a campus with two primary schools. Pupils all have a statement of special educational needs. The main groups of special educational needs and/or disabilities include severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism-spectrum disorders. Many pupils have, in addition, multi-sensory impairments, medical conditions and challenging behaviour. Approximately half of the pupils are of Pakistani heritage and most others are of White British heritage. More than half of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are four children in the Early Years Foundation Stage all of whom have profound and multiple learning difficulties.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school which is beginning to see the benefits of ambitious, experienced leadership. In the first year, some good provision has been established in key areas of the school's work and this elicits some good outcomes for pupils, although achievement overall is satisfactory. Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets the special educational needs of the children and helps them to make good progress. Comprehensive provision for pupils' care, support and guidance assures that personal care, medical needs and challenging behaviour are all managed effectively and expertly. Pupils are well cared for through constant good-quality support given by staff. Pupils arrive each day in anticipation of enjoyable interactions and experiences. The fact they feel safe is very evident in their demeanour. Behaviour is good and challenging behaviour diminishes over time because pupils are given clear routines to follow and are managed with the consistent application of effective strategies. Their sense of belonging to a community has been effectively built and they are happy and fulfilled in contributing in both small and significant ways to life in school. Pupils' self-awareness, confidence and regard for others grow well, underpinning their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teaching, the use of assessment and the curriculum are satisfactory, reflecting the fact that they are not yet as developed or embedded in the school's work to the extent of having an overall good impact on pupils' outcomes. School leaders and staff are working with determination to raise the quality of teaching, in particular by their efforts to make good use of assessment procedures in planning lessons. At present, the planning of what pupils learn is not sharply focused enough on the use of assessment information to push the rate of pupils' progress beyond what is expected. At this time, not all staff are skilled in observing and recording the small steps of progress pupils are capable of making. This impedes planning, in identifying the precise next steps in pupils' learning. In the lessons observed, pupils, whatever their special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and the school's data on progress over time, while not extensive, shows likewise. A significant amount of non-attendance is largely the result of illness and treatment relating to medical conditions. However, unauthorised absences such as holidays taken in term time are not yet tackled by a robust implementation of the school's attendance policy.

The headteacher gives clear direction to the school and staff are a cohesive and motivated team as a result of the high expectations of leaders. They understand and are capable of meeting the wide range of pupils' needs. Senior leaders evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately and have set out their programme of improvement accordingly. Most progress has been made on improving provision for pupils' welfare and safeguarding arrangements are good. The development of data gathering and analysis, of pupils' progress in particular, is on track but is not yet a significant influence on planning learning or defining priorities for improvement. The extent and focus of monitoring and

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evaluation is increasingly sharp but is not sufficiently systematic and embedded so as to increase the capacity for sustained improvement above being satisfactory at present.

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?

- Link the planning of what each pupil is taught firmly to the outcomes from assessments and ensure teachers and their assistants are skilled in observing and recording small steps in pupils' progress.
- Raise the level of attendance by robustly tackling unauthorised absences.
- Develop rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures of the school's work to steer improvement systematically, particularly in relation to raising the quality of teaching and, by closely tracking pupils' progress, raising their achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school, a fact all parents and carers noted in their questionnaires. They come to school ready to learn and their engagement is increased by the good relationship with staff. All of their immediate needs are carefully attended to and, as a result, pupils are relaxed and interested in what lessons hold for them. The high ratio of staff to pupils in many classrooms means some of their learning benefits from intensive interactions. This support ensures pupils sustain concentration, effort and, in particular, improves their communication skills, through describing what is in a picture, in signing and using symbols and using weaving to improve hand/eye co-ordination. For their age, pupils' attainment on entry is very low as a result of their complex learning difficulties. Overall, learning and progress are satisfactory, with no significant differences between groups of pupils. However, the way teachers plan lesson activities is not always firmly based on detailed assessment information. As a result, learning objectives are sometimes too vague and pupils are not always challenged as well as they could be by their work.

Pupils respond to expectations and behave well because staff use consistent and effective approaches to managing behaviour. The incidence of outbursts is greatly reduced. Pupils behave in a safe manner and their sense of feeling safe is much enhanced. All parents and carers completing the questionnaire agree their children are safe. Pupils are kept physically active in learning to walk, run, jump and ride bicycles. They are aware of risks to avoid and are offered healthy food and drinks at breaks and lunchtime. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to be helpful in the classroom. They express views through questionnaires and the school council, which has resulted in improvements to lunchtime activities. Money has been collected for the Pakistani Earthquake Appeal and for Children in Need.

Pupils' readily overcome any resistance to new experiences and take an interest in those around them in school. Their understanding about good and bad behaviour means they develop an awareness of how they can affect others. Celebrations of achievements and religious festivals in assemblies and music and dance activities contribute well to their cultural development.

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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	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	3
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	
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?

Teachers and their teams of assistants look after pupils well and manage behaviour effectively. In lessons, pupils are usually relaxed and follow routines, which help them to focus and engage in lessons. Teachers and their assistants know pupils' needs and plan work that broadly matches their capabilities. However, detailed assessments of learning are still being assimilated by teachers. The use of assessment is satisfactory and assists in identifying appropriate targets for communication and personal development, leading to relevant individual plans in these areas of learning. Besides the use of signs and symbols in communicating, staff find opportunities to speak in the pupils' home language. Teachers and their assistants are refining the skills of close observation and starting to build a record of progress. While this is essential in setting sharply-focused learning objectives in lessons for each pupil, objectives are sometimes too vague on what pupils should learn or what they need to learn next.

The curriculum provides work and activities relevant to the range of needs of pupils and is reasonably broad in its scope. It is not fully embedded across the school as a coherent scheme, although its development is planned and improvement is under way. Good progress has been made in establishing effective approaches for pupils with autism-

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spectrum disorders. They are offered the sorts of routines, means of communication and other methods that help them to learn.

Pupils' well-being is effectively promoted by staff who are aware and knowledgeable of their needs. The school is warmly welcoming and pupils are greeted every morning so that they have a good start to the day. Routines and roles are clearly defined with regard to physiotherapy programmes and medical treatments for those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. This ensures pupils feel relaxed and safe and ready for the school day. Productive links with external agencies are well established and a wide range of specialist support guides the work of the school. Good headway has been made in establishing behaviour management strategies, especially for a minority of pupils whose behaviour is very challenging. The steps the school takes to promote good attendance are not robust enough to challenge some absences. The reasons for absences are often complex and unavoidable. However, not enough is done to eliminate unauthorised absences.

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?

Senior leaders are ambitious for the school and are keen to drive improvement. They have succeeded in getting the school as fully operational as possible, although they have encountered some unavoidable problems. The hydrotherapy pool and rebound therapy have remained out of action because of health and safety issues, which have only very recently been resolved. The disparate staff who joined the school are now a cohesive team and morale is good. They enjoy clear direction from senior leaders and have high expectations. Absolute priorities covering pupils' safety, care and support are firmly embedded. Safeguarding arrangements are good because checks on the suitability of staff and others are rigorous. School security and procedures for protecting pupils are clear and understood well and lines of communication with agencies are good. Other partnerships are developing, in particular with the neighbouring primary school and other special schools in the local authority. Engagement with parents is being driven by clear priorities. This has led to parental workshops and training such as on managing children's behaviour at home. Some workshops are attended by parents of children in the primary schools and, together with other partnerships, the school is developing its profile in the community and contributing satisfactorily to promoting community cohesion.

The evaluation of the school's work is done by senior leaders who monitor teaching, behaviour and analyse pupils' progress. This provides a broad and accurate picture of the school's effectiveness, although as yet it is not systematic and rigorous. It is sufficient to

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ensure that the school is able to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination satisfactorily. The governing body has fulfilled its duties, ensuring school policies are approved and being implemented. Governors are increasing their first-hand knowledge of the school's work by undertaking training in conducting 'learning walks' and in allocating responsibilities to different governors for different aspects of the school's work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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

Provision for the very few Nursery and Reception children is good because it is led and managed well by an effective and experienced teacher. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is adapted well to the needs of the children, all of whom have profound and multiple learning difficulties and stay in wheelchairs. The classroom and outside space are effectively arranged to provide all the areas of learning and are supported effectively with a wide range of sensory resources. Activities are well-planned to promote the children's learning and good progress. They feel safe and comfortable in their surroundings. Good relationships with staff elicit positive responses. Work and activities are planned well to encourage communication, social interaction and physical development. In the morning greeting work, children showed enthusiasm and good responses to their picture portraits, some sounding letters and all listening intently and with enjoyment to recorded messages from parents, which they controlled with a switch. Their progress is assessed effectively and evidenced well in children's individual records of achievement.

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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

Views of parents and carers

The response from parents and carers to the questionnaire was around the national average. The views expressed are very positive, showing the large majority of respondents agrees or strongly agrees on almost all of the statements about the school. This varies only where a few parents and carers believe the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns, and written comments point to the closure of the hydrotherapy pool as a significant cause of discontent. Inspectors understand that the closure of the hydrotherapy pool was beyond the school's control but are assured that the health and safety issues requiring its closure are now resolved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Delius 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 96 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	70	6	20	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	60	8	27	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	67	7	23	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	53	9	30	4	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	40	16	53	1	3	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)	9	30	14	47	3	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	63	8	27	3	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	50	13	43	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	53	9	30	4	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	50	12	40	2	7	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	73	7	23	1	3	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



13 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Delius Special School, Bradford, BD3 8QX

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when the inspectors visited your school, and many thanks to the group of pupils who met with an inspector to discuss their views of school. The school provides you with a satisfactory education.

These are some of the good things about you and your school:

- the staff take good care of you, keep you safe and support you whenever you need help
- you feel safe in school, enjoy learning and develop a healthy lifestyle
- your behaviour is good and you are always willing to be helpful and contribute to making your school successful
- you grow in self-confidence, have a good regard for others and take a positive interest in the world around you.

I have asked the school to:

- make sure all staff have a clear picture of your progress and use this information to plan the right activities for you
- check carefully when you are absent from school that this is necessary and if not, to take steps to ensure you always attend school
- do everything possible to keep a close check on how well all of the school's work is helping you make the best possible progress and achievement.

You can all help by aiming for good attendance and continuing to make good efforts with your work. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector

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