

Lydgate School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107801
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	377650
Inspection dates	5–6 October 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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Hill
Headteacher	Nicky Rogers
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 November 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed involving nine teachers. Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils and representatives of the governing body and local authority. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, a range of data on pupils' performance, curriculum planning and the school's policies for safeguarding pupils. The questionnaires from 37 parents and carers were scrutinised along with those 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.

- Is the evaluation made by leaders of data on pupils' performance securely based on accurate and well-evidenced assessment of their progress?
- What accounts for the significant improvement in progress in 2011, highlighted in the data on pupils' performance?
- Are pupils' communication skills being developed effectively?

Information about the school

The school provides for pupils with communication, sensory and physical disabilities, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, severe learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher has been in post for under a year having worked as co-headteacher with the previous incumbent. Four teachers left at the end of the last school year for retirement or posts in other schools.

The school has the Sports Mark and Activemark awards, the local authority's Healthy Choice Award for school dinners and the Quality Standard in Careers, Education and Guidance.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Lydgate School is a good school. Good leadership and management are driving improvement effectively. Senior leaders are ambitious in their aims and set high expectations. Increasingly, they are steering the school in creative and innovative ways and moving towards achieving a full range of high quality provision. Improvement is being tackled over a wide front. So far, this has impacted positively on the curriculum. It is outstanding in its breadth and is a very close match to the wide range and complexity of pupils' needs as well as developing their interests, talents and enjoyment of learning. Monitoring of the school's work is comprehensive and rigorous. Leaders know their school well so that self-evaluation is accurate and development planning sets a fast pace for change. The staff as a whole are responding well to new leadership and some rapid change. Consequently, the school's capacity for sustaining improvement is good. The great majority of parents and carers are wholly positive in their views of the school and its leadership.

The focus on pupils' performance has been sharpened by looking thoroughly into the progress of both individuals and every group of pupils. This analysis is shared with staff and is being used positively to improve pupils' performance. As a result, in 2011 the proportion of pupils exceeding their targets increased significantly. It also enables leaders to be accurate about the effectiveness of provision and pinpoint the improvements that can contribute to enhancing pupils' outcomes. The insight into pupils' performance together with a curriculum superbly tailored to all of their needs contributes significantly to the school promoting equality to an outstanding extent. Whatever their special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils achieve well and they enjoy learning. Their communication skills are developed effectively as speaking and listening are promoted well along with signing and the use of symbols. Pupils all learn well and make good progress as a result of good teaching and assessment. In a few lessons seen it was outstanding and in some more it was satisfactory. More so than not, lessons are lively and enjoyable and work challenges pupils. Occasionally, teaching does not engage pupils sufficiently actively in learning, promote their independence or help them evaluate their learning.

The care, guidance and support for pupils is good. They are well safeguarded and the fact that pupils feel safe is largely the result of their behaviour, which is always potentially challenging, being managed effectively. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good. The many opportunities offered in school for physical activities, healthy eating and promoting good health are ensuring pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle to an

outstanding extent. The large number and wide variety of partnerships involving schools, special services and voluntary bodies is outstanding and adds strength to the curriculum and pupils' support and guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve learning by spreading the good practice in teaching that encourages:
 - pupils' independence
 - the active engagement of pupils in learning
 - skills in evaluating pupils' achievement in lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry is low reflecting, in the case of the large majority, their complex special educational needs. However, within the wide range of special educational needs attainment varies considerably. By the end of Key Stage 4, a few higher-attaining students who have moderate learning difficulties gain GCSE passes in English, mathematics, design and technology and art and more gain Entry Level Certificates. These students and some with severe learning difficulties achieve awards from the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. For all groups of pupils, evidence from the school's data, their work in books and in lessons show they make good progress in reaching and often exceeding challenging targets. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils come into lessons with a positive sense of purpose and make good efforts in answering questions, discussing points and in completing tasks. In English, Key Stage 3 and 4 students have good insights into the characters and plot of Macbeth leading to many thoughtful comments about the play in lessons. The youngest pupils quickly learn to count and put numbers in the correct order and the oldest use good number skills to solve problems. Their good progress in lessons and in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development prepares them well for the future.

Pupils behave well, form friendships, support and help each other. Pupils are kept active and improve their movement, fitness and self-confidence through the great many enjoyable and challenging outdoor activities and sports on offer. All are included in organised events and many take advantage of regular opportunities for adventure activities on the hills and around the lakes. Pupils are offered wholesome food in school and learn to cook healthy foods. Visitors to school teach about safety and staying healthy so pupils acquire a good knowledge of risks and the good choices for a healthy lifestyle. Pupils contribute to the school's warm and friendly atmosphere. The many responsibilities they manage well are offered through enterprise projects such as stalls and the tuck shop. In the wider community pupils have worked with senior citizens on a memories project and take part in church festivals, music and dance events.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop 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	2

How effective is the provision?

Despite the recent significant changes in staffing, leaders have maintained the good quality of teaching and assessment seen at the time of the previous inspection. Thorough assessment is used effectively in planning work that challenges and is closely matched to pupils' different capabilities and special educational needs. Teachers are sharply focused on what pupils should learn and use their resources well to achieve good outcomes. Lively teaching, effective questioning, illustration, the use of symbols and signing all help pupils communicate and engage well in learning. Teaching assistants are self-motivated and skilful in supporting individuals and small groups in classrooms. Although satisfactory, some lessons are less effective in promoting good learning and progress because tasks are too prescribed to challenge pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills. Moreover, too much of the lesson is taken over by teacher-talk reducing opportunities for pupils' independence and active engagement in learning.

The curriculum is developed to an outstanding extent. The school and its many partners provide an excellent breadth of work and activities well matched to pupils' widely different capabilities. This ensures in a most effective way that every pupil, whatever their special educational needs and/or disabilities, has the opportunity to learn and make progress. The curriculum is planned thoroughly and ensures pupils find interests and enjoyment in their work including many experiences which prepare them well for the future. The enterprise curriculum offers opportunities for older students to develop initiatives, manage responsibilities and work in the community. Higher-attaining students can work to gain appropriate accreditation. Intervention programmes provide individuals and groups with sharply-focused opportunities for speech, language and alternative forms of communication. In addition, further programmes support the development of higher level literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is greatly enriched by outdoor education, adventure activities, residential experiences and sports, to which all pupils have access.

¹The 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.

Staff know pupils well and provide them with good care, support and guidance. There are good arrangements for keeping pupils safe and managing their behaviour. A well-established system of self-referral means pupils can raise concerns and they know who to approach for support. There are group activities supporting pupils with physical development needs or communication difficulties. Links are numerous with agencies providing specialist services. Various community groups contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding of safety such as paramedics and fire fighters.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have settled well and are embedding ambition and driving improvement. Much is being achieved towards improving the school and the pace of development is brisk. The school has stayed well on course despite significant changes in staff. Leaders set a clear direction and, together with the good governing body's effective challenge, set high expectations. The response of staff is positive. They are an effective team with good morale. New roles for staff have been defined, broadening the school's work and intensifying its responses to pupils' range of complex needs. As a result there is good improvement in the expertise and provision for nurture, communication, learning support and behaviour management. Rigorous monitoring ensures developments are embedded and are having a positive impact.

The school enjoys a good reputation among parents and carers and it keeps them well informed about their children's progress and the work of the school. Parents and carers are offered help to support their children at home and in connecting with support services. The outstanding partnerships supporting pupils and the curriculum are cost effective and greatly enhance the work of the school. Specialist contributions to the school's provision for speech and language, physiotherapy and behaviour promote learning and progress well. The careers service and links with businesses offer much to pupils' work-related learning and preparation for the future. Links with schools and sports groups enrich the curriculum further.

Leaders are fully committed to tackling discrimination and act robustly in promoting equality, which is at the heart of the school's work. The very thorough monitoring of different groups of pupils leads to effective interventions, ensuring pupils make good progress and that all pupils have good access to the wide range of learning opportunities. For example, ways are always found to include pupils with a physical disability alongside others in the many outdoor activities and the residential visits. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are well established. Roles and responsibilities are clear and all staff are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. The governing body pays particular attention to ensuring safeguarding arrangements are effective. The school is a cohesive community and is effective in reaching out into its local

community. Pupils make good use of its shops and bus services when learning independence. They also connect with groups in the community for various projects, such as sharing the memories of its senior citizens. Pupils also learn about the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and in other countries.

These are the grades for the 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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire was above average and the very large majority of parents and carers responding expressed positive views of the school. All respondents agree that the school is led and managed effectively and that their children are kept safe. The overwhelming majority are happy with their child’s experience at the school. Inspection findings support the views of these parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lydgate 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 68 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	65	10	27	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	73	10	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	59	14	38	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	41	20	54	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	59	13	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	43	16	43	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	51	16	43	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)	19	51	16	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	65	12	32	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	57	14	38	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	43	20	54	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	65	12	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	62	12	32	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



7 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lydgate School, Holmfirth HD9 1LS

Many thanks for your warm welcome when I visited Lydgate School. Thanks also to the group of students who met with an inspector to share their views. You told us how much you like your school and we can understand why.

Lydgate School is a good school and some of its features are outstanding. You are making good progress and you are achieving well. Most of your lessons are good and a few could be improved further.

- The variety of school activities you do is outstanding. Your work and activities are made all the more interesting and enjoyable by the help given by many people and groups from outside of school.
- You have many opportunities for walking, climbing and other outdoor pursuits, which make an outstanding contribution to your adoption of healthy lifestyles.
- Staff take good care of you and, as a result, you feel safe and behave well.
- You are helpful in many ways in school and in the community.

In order to help the school to improve further, I have asked school leaders to:

- ensure all lessons provide you with good ways to be more actively involved in learning and to evaluate how much you have learnt.

You can help improve your school by taking the opportunity to play an active part in lessons. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon
Lead inspector

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