

# Doubletrees School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112085
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	378417
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Mascall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	95
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	24
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Penny Spencer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kim Robertson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	St Blazey Par Cornwall PL24 2DS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01726 812757
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<b>Age group</b>	2–19
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	3–4 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed 13 teachers. One lesson was led by outside providers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Pupils' work, information on their progress, safeguarding policies and other documents were evaluated. Questionnaires from 42 parents and carers, 54 staff and 18 pupils were scrutinised.

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

- The impact of recent improvements in the quality of teaching on pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of planning of the curriculum to ensure there is progression of skills for pupils.
- Whether children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making the progress in all the areas of learning that they should.
- How effectively data are being used to drive improvements in provision and ensuring that governors are able to challenge the school to improve.

## Information about the school

Doubletrees School caters predominantly for pupils with severe and complex learning disabilities. An increasing number of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders, some of whom have challenging behaviour. A number have additional needs associated with physical disabilities and medical conditions. There has been an increase in the population of pupils with challenging autistic spectrum disorders since the previous inspection. All have a statement of special educational needs. A small number are in the care of the local authority. The school serves pupils from a 40 mile radius of St Austell. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

At the time of the inspection there were a very small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who were aged four and above. The school has not had any children aged three and under for more than four years so this provision was not inspected. Many of the classes within the school are mixed-age range and occasionally contain pupils from different key stages. The number of classes in which there are sixth form students has expanded this year from two to five. In the last year there has been a considerable turnover of staff. The school has achieved Activemark, Sports Mark and Healthy Schools status.

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

Doubletrees School provides a satisfactory education for pupils. The school is a happy place where pupils feel very safe and behave well. They clearly enjoy their time in school and this is reflected in their above-average rate of attendance. Considerable importance is placed on preparing pupils for life when they leave school, especially ensuring that they make good progress in their personal development. Pupils take every opportunity to be involved in a range of physical activities and make well-informed decisions about eating healthily. Because of this they have an excellent understanding of staying healthy. The effective systems for care and guidance and the strong partnerships with a range of professionals support pupils well. Parents and carers are overwhelming in their support for the school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community and do much to support local and national charities, for example singing at the Eden Project in aid of Children in Need.

While the school has continued to develop at a satisfactory pace, the impact of a number of staff changes, particularly in the last year, has prevented senior leaders from bringing about improvements at a faster rate. The headteacher has established a high quality staff where morale is high and there is a clear sense of purpose. The drive and ambition of the leadership team to bring about change is shared by all and there is a strong commitment by staff to develop the school further. The governing body provides the school with a satisfactory level of challenge and support and has recently reviewed its role in order to increase its effectiveness. All of these factors contribute to the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning and benefit from good teaching. Pupils in the rest of the school, including those in post-16 education, make satisfactory progress and achievement and this reflects the satisfactory quality of teaching in all other year groups. The school has developed a range of processes to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. However, these are not sufficiently rigorous and this limits their effectiveness. Although there is an awareness of the levels pupils are working at, not all staff use this information to ensure that targets set for learning are sufficiently challenging. As a result, not all pupils make the progress they are capable of. There are also occasions when teaching assistants are unclear about their roles in lessons because teachers' planning is not sufficiently detailed. In these circumstances teaching assistants are not always able to offer an effective level of support to pupils and this affects their progress. The curriculum is well focused on developing pupils' personal development. However, the structure for each class's day varies and while the vast majority of teachers ensure there is sufficient time planned to enable pupils to be involved in a good range of activities each day, this is not always the case.

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 the curriculum by ensuring that time is used effectively in each class to provide a good range of experiences each day.
- Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of provision are more rigorous so that any inconsistencies are addressed effectively.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it becomes consistently good or better throughout the school by:
  - ensuring that the planning of lessons is shared with teaching assistants so that pupils can be supported effectively to learn
  - making better use of data about pupils' progress to set challenging targets that enable all pupils to achieve their full potential.

<b>3</b>
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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils show great enthusiasm for all that they do in school. They are keen to settle quickly to tasks and work hard in lessons. Pupils in a Key Stage 2 lesson made good progress at the start of the day, developing their skills in communication through talking about what they would be doing during the day and discussing what the weather was like. In a lesson on recycling, pupils were able to identify different forms of packaging and what could be recycled. They worked together effectively in groups and made good progress because they were supported well by teaching assistants and this helped them to share their ideas with others. However, in a few lessons the pace of learning is slow and pupils do not make the expected rate of progress.

Behaviour throughout the school is good and pupils comment on the fact that they feel safe. They are confident that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils are very keen on sport, particularly football, and are very proud of their achievements in competitions. Pupils' commitment to healthy eating is reflected in their choices at lunchtimes where many chose fruit rather than the chocolate pudding! Excellence in promoting healthy lifestyles has been recognised in several national awards. Pupils are very involved in decision making within the school and their views are sought about a number of aspects, including the appointment of staff. There are pupil representatives on the Doubletrees Disability Equality Scheme committee. Pupils have also worked on a number of projects such as the school travel plan and have reported to the governing body on these issues.

Attendance is above average even though some pupils are affected by ill health as a result of their disabilities. During their time at the school pupils develop into confident young people who know how to behave sensibly in a range of situations.

As a result, they develop many of the attributes necessary to support them well in the next stage of their education and in the world of work.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The very strong relationships between staff and pupils enable pupils to have the confidence to try new experiences. A strong feature of lessons is the lively delivery and effective teamwork between staff. In an outstanding well-planned lesson in a Key Stage 2 class, all staff ensured that pupils made very good progress in understanding aspects of autumn. Very well-organised resources provided a range of multi-sensory interactive activities which were well focused on pupils’ individual needs. As a result, pupils responded very well and clearly enjoyed and learnt from the experiences. While aspects of good teaching are evident in most lessons, teaching is not consistently good across the school. Occasionally, the pace of learning is slow and teaching assistants are not always well informed about their roles, for example, in recording pupils’ successes. In a few instances, teachers do not ensure that the work set for pupils is suitably challenging in order to ensure all make the progress they are capable of.

There are strengths in the curriculum, particularly in the good focus on supporting pupils in developing the personal and social skills they will need in the next stage of their education and training. However, not all classes ensure that a sufficiently broad range of experiences is offered to pupils throughout the day that extend their learning experiences. Effective partnerships provide pupils with good opportunities to work with local schools and colleges and gain experience of the wider world.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

High priority is placed on pupils’ care and welfare and the school’s good links with a range of external agencies do much to support pupils and their families. The very close links with families and carers also help to support pupils and are highly valued by their families. Pupils’ dignity is respected and support staff continually interact with young people to ensure they understand what is happening to them and why, for example when being lifted from their wheelchair. The school works well with those pupils with challenging autistic spectrum disorders. However, the school’s systems to record incidents resulting from pupils’ behaviour lapses are presently under review.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, well supported by the governing body, has been effective in establishing a staff team dedicated and committed to school improvement. While several staff are new to the school, all have responded well to their roles. They are clear about how they want to improve their areas of responsibility and are beginning to have an impact on raising the quality of provision. For example, there has been well-focused training for teachers and good links established with other schools to extend teachers’ skills. As a result, the quality of teaching is beginning to improve. Much remains to be done but the school recognises that the monitoring of aspects of teaching and the curriculum is not rigorous enough to ‘iron out’ any remaining inconsistencies. School improvement planning is supported by appropriate self-evaluation and identifies several of the areas for development raised in the inspection. The use of data has been developed and is now providing the school with a better understanding of the progress of individuals.

Constantly improving systems ensure that any concerns regarding equality of opportunity are addressed in full and discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The governing body has established an action plan to ensure that it provides the school with the necessary challenge in order to improve its effectiveness. There is a commitment on the part of the school and governing body to ensure that safeguarding policies are of a high quality. Safeguarding arrangements within the school are good and the vetting of staff is thorough. The effective partnerships with a wide range of professionals do much to support pupils’ learning opportunities as well as supporting their well-being. This is most evident in their positive impact on the curriculum and the high level of support provided by the different agencies involved with pupils. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school has a high profile in the local community and there are appropriate plans underway to extend this further, both nationally and internationally.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is planned well to ensure children are provided with a wide range of experiences in order to develop their understanding of the world in which they live. Children benefit from effective teaching and this is enabling them to make good progress while in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Particular attention is given to communication and social development and as a result children make very good progress in these areas. Children clearly enjoy their time in class, responding well to sessions such as those at the start of the day. Many are beginning to recognise symbols for activities and can choose which activity they want to move to. Children respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for helping in class and are clearly interested in learning. They behave well and show that they feel safe. There is good teamwork among the staff and good attention is paid to health and safety and safeguarding. Knowledge of children’s individual needs is good and staff use a variety of methods to encourage children to communicate with both other children and adults. For example, children were actively engaged in the sensory studio in using equipment, operating, for example, light switches and producing sound from a microphone. Importance is placed on giving children choices and children are encouraged to decide, for example, whether to press a switch or not.

Leadership and management are good. There is a clear understanding of what needs to be done in order to improve the provision. For example, the school is aware of the need to improve the outdoor accommodation and ensure better access for children. Staff are in the process of reviewing the systems for tracking children’s progress to ensure they will have a better overview of children’s overall progress.



*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

## Sixth form

The school has put in place a curriculum that supports students appropriately to enable them to make satisfactory progress. Systems to track their progress are in the process of being refined. At present there are too many different processes in place and these are limiting senior leaders’ ability to have a sufficiently clear overview of students’ progress.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and resources are used well to support learning. Work is often well matched to students’ individual abilities, such as in a good lesson on Spanish customs where the range of tasks was challenging for all. However, on occasions, the pace of lessons is slow, with students waiting while each takes a turn, for example, in discussions about the day’s forthcoming events.

The care, support and guidance of students is good, and a strength of teaching is the good relationships between staff and students and the considerable care staff show in meeting students’ needs. Good attention is paid to students’ health and safety.

The increase in the size of the sixth form has prompted leaders to review the leadership of this aspect of provision. There is a clear understanding of areas for development which has enabled the sixth form to improve satisfactorily. However, the school is in the process of establishing an alternative leadership structure to ensure there is specific responsibility to enable it to develop at a faster rate.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

The very high return from parents and carers reflects their very positive views of the school. Their comments can be summarised by one parent who wrote ‘My son has been at Doubletrees for nearly 16 years. During that time the school has supported him extremely well. He is contented, enjoys school life and has achieved many things above and beyond our expectations. We have also felt supported as a family.’

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Doubletrees 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	71	11	26	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	79	9	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	32	76	10	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	64	14	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	76	9	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	67	12	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	67	14	33	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)	23	55	12	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	34	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	67	13	31	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	62	15	36	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	69	11	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	32	76	10	24	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	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 are 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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



5 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Doubletrees School, St Blazey PL24 2DS**

Thank you very much for being so friendly and helpful when we came to visit you recently. We very much enjoyed meeting you and a special thank you to those of you who took time to talk to us.

We found that your school is satisfactory. You told us how safe you feel and how well staff support you. The care and support you get from staff are good. You have a very good understanding of keeping healthy and it was good to hear about how much you enjoy football.

Teaching ensures that you make satisfactory progress. However, occasionally, teachers do not always make sure that staff are used well in lessons so that everyone learns. Sometimes teachers do not ensure that the work in class helps you to do as well as you can, especially in improving your literacy and numeracy skills. You have lots of interesting experiences during the day but sometimes these are not always planned well enough so that you learn lots of different things.

The headteacher and her staff are committed to do the best for you. I have asked staff to check more carefully on what goes on in school so that all the good and very good practice that goes on is the same across the school.

I wish you all well for the future and I hope you will continue to help staff in making your school as good as it can be.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascal  
Lead inspector

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