

Loxley Hall School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124509
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380907
Inspection dates	12–13 December 2011
Reporting inspector	David Muir HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Glanfield
Headteacher	Richard Redgate
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2009
School address	Stafford Road Uttoxeter ST14 8RS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors observed 11 lessons and saw 11 teachers. Meetings were held with: the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team; several students; the Chair of the Governing Body; and a range of staff, including teachers and teaching assistants. Inspectors also had telephone contact with several parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including policies, student data and self-evaluation documents. Questionnaires were returned by eight parents and carers.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work, looking in detail at a number of key areas.

- How do leaders in the school promote the school's ethos and use it to raise expectations for all members of the school community?
- How accurate is the leadership's monitoring of students' progress during their time in the school?
- How well does the curriculum meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students in the school?
- How well does teaching meet the needs of all students, taking into account their special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Information about the school

Loxley Hall is a larger-than-average residential special school for boys with a primary special educational needs and/or disabilities of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, a majority of boys also have additional needs, including autistic spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactive disorders, which impact on their learning. The school serves the whole of Staffordshire with a small number of students from out of county. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is low. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is high. Nearly all students travel to school on local authority transport. Facilities exist for students to stay residentially. The residential facility was inspected by Ofsted in June 2011 and was judged to be outstanding overall. Currently, students can access this facility for one or two nights each week.

The school has achieved healthy school status and the Staffordshire Anti-bullying Pledge.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Loxley Hall School provides an outstanding standard of education. The dynamic headteacher, supported by an impressive and highly capable senior leadership team, promotes an ethos of high expectations which is understood and highly valued by all members of the school community. As a result, the drive for improvement in the school has gained momentum since the previous inspection. The school has developed an outstanding array of partnerships. These enhance and support the excellent curriculum, which meets the needs of all students, tailored to their specific needs and interests. The school is developing an increasingly innovative curriculum, which is adapted as required to ensure that all students are re-engaged in their education. Leaders have implemented very strong procedures to monitor and evaluate the performance of the school. Where areas have been identified, plans devised and action taken to improve or develop an area, there is clear evidence of a substantial impact on outcomes. This shows that the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. The governing body has a good awareness of the work of the school and of its strength and areas for improvement. However, members of the governing body are not consistently regular visitors to the school to collect first-hand evidence in these areas.

Students, together with their parents and carers, receive outstanding levels of care, guidance and support, which help them to prepare extremely well for the next stage of their lives. Students are supported, through the school and its residence, to develop ways to manage their own needs during their time in the school. The school is a caring and inclusive community with a focus on returning students to their local communities where possible, and this is greatly appreciated by students and their parents and carers.

Students feel safe and adopt healthy lifestyles outstandingly. They also make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. Behaviour overall in the school is good. Although students attend the school due to their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, there is clear evidence of the positive impact of the school's work in these areas. By the time they leave school, students are able to manage their own behaviour to a high level. The school provided many case studies to show that over time, incidents for individual students decreased dramatically and no disruption to learning was seen during the inspection. When students do feel that they need further support with this aspect of their development, they are clearly aware of the systems available to support them and use them extremely effectively to manage their own behaviour. Attendance is low,

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but the data shows significant improvements for many students, some of whom were poor attenders or school refusers at their previous schools. Students' attendance improves significantly because of the work of the school in supporting families and because students enjoy their time in Loxley Hall. Although the school promotes the students' spiritual, social and moral development well, they have relatively few opportunities to engage with people from other cultures.

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good and this closely matched the school's evaluation of this area. This also reflected the school's monitoring data, which shows that students learn well and make good progress over time. This includes the contextual factor that many students have to be re-engaged in education through activities to promote their personal development, before they can participate in a formal learning environment. Many teachers are teaching to a good standard with some outstanding aspects, although this is not consistent enough to move learning to an outstanding level. In the few incidents where students make less than expected progress, the school has clearly identified personal reasons why this has happened and taken appropriate steps to ensure that there is no repeat. The school has clear evidence of the impact of these actions on students' progress. However, many students have additional learning difficulties that prevent them from reaching age-appropriate standards. All students gain formally recognised qualifications before they leave the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by identifying and sharing the best practice available in the school.
- Improve the provision for cultural development by providing students with opportunities to interact more with people from cultures different to their own.
- Work with parents and carers to improve students' attendance and set incremental targets to monitor improvements.
- Improve the work of the governing body by its members collecting first-hand evidence of the school's performance via a planned programme of visits.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

During their time in Loxley Hall, students increasingly re-engage with their learning. Evidence from the inspection and the school's monitoring shows that students are making good progress overall. When they enter the school, they generally have attainment which is low due to their additional special educational needs and/or disabilities and their previous experiences of education. While in the school, they make at least good progress in all areas of academic and personal development. The school analyses the progress made by different groups of students and has found that here is no difference in the progress they make.

Students' achievement and enjoyment of learning are good. As students become

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increasingly re-engaged in their education they make more progress. Good teaching overall leads to good learning in lessons. One example of outstanding learning seen was an English lesson where students were all actively engaged in reading out loud and discussing the development of characters. The learning environment was lively and fun which encouraged students to willingly participate and make outstanding gains in their learning and personal development. Students follow a wide range of courses and gain qualifications according to their needs and abilities. These include: Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards, National Open College Network (NOCN) assessments and GCSEs.

Students enjoy school and feel extremely safe. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles to an outstanding degree. Extremely effective use is made of the school’s facilities to support physical activity and the local area to support physical activity trips and residential visits. Food is healthy and nutritious and students know what constitutes a healthy diet and make appropriate choices. During their time in school, students develop strong awareness of the impact of smoking and drug use on their health. There is a school council which has influenced decision-making in the school, including the establishment of a bike track through the wooded area of the school grounds. Students took an important part in the founding of the impressive farm within the school grounds. They are also active in the local community and have been seen in the local town undertaking fund raising activities for causes, such as Children in Need and breast cancer awareness, sometimes with causes driven by students’ personal circumstances. Moral, spiritual and social development are good and are seen in the way that students reflect on their actions, are increasingly able to self-manage their behaviour, and in the way that they conduct themselves around school and in the wider community. Students have respectful attitudes to those around them and have played a major part in developing an inclusive and welcoming community.

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

*In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to the expectations for the pupils’ age

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

During the inspection, the majority of teaching seen was good, with some satisfactory and some outstanding teaching also seen. In the best lessons, students were engaged because teachers presented activities which engaged the interest and ability levels of all students. Teachers used the time well and moved learning on at a good pace, varying activities to keep students challenged at a level appropriate to their needs. This promoted a learning environment which developed students' confidence and self-esteem and promoted good levels of active participation in the lesson. Strong questioning promoted students' learning and helped them to engage with their work. Skilful support from teaching assistants also provided reinforcement and encouragement, enabling students to remain on task with minimal prompting. In the best lessons, there were also references to the development of literacy and numeracy and how they can be improved. Teachers' use of assessment helped to support outstanding aspects of personal development and enabled students to re-engage in their learning and improve their learning outcomes. Students are continually reminded of their levels and how they can improve further in their work. In all lessons seen, some elements of best practice were seen and students remained on task. However some areas, such as a variety of activities to meet all students' needs and interests, were not consistently applied.

The outstanding curriculum is being continually developed and enhanced. This ensures that all students receive their basic curricular entitlement and, in addition, high quality bespoke opportunities to learn in ways and areas that further engage and enthuse them. The recent development of the on-site farm is an extremely high quality example of this. In a little over a year, the staff and students have built the farm, including using their construction skills to build the fences and their bricklaying skills to build a pigsty. They have then been involved in breeding a range of animals and looking after them appropriately. All aspects of this work are recorded and contribute to the NOCN assessments. The curriculum is supported by numerous colleges, school and other external providers to ensure full coverage. In line with this, there are many extra-curricular and enrichment activities, with a wide range of trips and educational visits to support learning and personal development. This programme is greatly valued by students and their parents and carers.

Care is at the heart of the school's work and underpins its ethos to an impressive level. This is supported by the close collaborative work between school staff, residential staff and external agencies. This close multi-agency working ensures that everyone concerned with the students has an excellent understanding of their needs and that strategies used to promote personal and academic outcomes are

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consistently applied. This is much valued by external providers who work with the students outside the school and the school always has someone in attendance at professionals’ meetings when deciding strategies to support students. There are strong procedures in place to support students when they move in to the school, from Key Stage 3 to Kay Stage 4 and on to college or other provider or employer. This has led to a dramatic reduction, in recent years, in the number of students who do not go on to education, employment or training when they leave Loxley Hall. Annual reviews are held in the students’ local communities to allow parents and carers to attend more easily. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the support and guidance provided by the school as they see that it has given their children renewed opportunities to progress on to become contributing members of society.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The impact of leadership and management of the school is outstanding due to the clear vision of the headteacher and the way that is supported by senior and middle leaders. All members of the school community are clear of the core purpose of the school. They strive to ensure that students are re-engaged successfully and are able to return to their local communities to continue their education, training or to go on to gainful employment. High expectations permeate all aspects of the school’s work and staff at all levels lead by example. The school’s systems for monitoring all aspects of its work, including the quality of teaching and learning, are extremely effective and they provide robust evidence on which to build plans for further improvements. Recent improvements show that this has been extremely successful in bringing about the necessary improvements identified at the previous inspection.

The governing body has challenged and supported the leadership of the school through written and verbal reports. It knows the school’s strengths and areas for improvement well. However, there is not enough evidence of members of the governing body actively collecting evidence first-hand to support the reports. Systems for safeguarding are outstanding at all levels. The school has been highlighted by the local authority as a high quality practitioner and is being used as a model for other provisions. It is particularly strong in its depth of knowledge of the students and how well their needs are met and assessed. This is done with the input of all relevant school staff and external agencies, and is very flexible to ensure that all areas of potential risk are covered. There is a good overlap of responsible staff, so that there is minimal risk of students not being appropriately safeguarded in any

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given activity. Systems are such that need and required provision can be put in place very rapidly as needed. The school promotes equality to an outstanding level. The school knows students well. It analyses them all according to a range of criteria to ensure that their needs as young adults are increasingly met. The school is also aware of its duty to tackle any perceived discrimination by students and does this robustly, including involving parents and carers, to ensure a strong follow up so that there are no recurrences. Community cohesion is outstanding as the school knows its students and their families extremely well and understands their needs in a national context. Leaders focus on ensuring that families’ needs are met and that they are supported extremely well in ways that take their personal circumstances in to account. The impact of the school’s work on families and students and the wider community is monitored closely to ensure it is as effective as it can be.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires were returned from eight parents and carers and the large majority of these were positive in all respects. Half of the returns contained written comments which were mostly of a positive nature. Comment included: ‘My son has come on leaps and bounds and I am exceptionally pleased’ and ‘I don’t know where me and my child would be without Loxley Hall. It’s an excellent school and teaching staff. They have helped my son to enjoy school’. The parents and carers spoken with during the inspection also reflected these sentiments.

Inspectors looked into the small minority of concerns that were raised about the school’s work. The inspection findings found no evidence to support these and the evidence collated reflected the positive views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Loxley Hall 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 8 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 70 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	25	5	63	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	3	38	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	4	50	2	25	1	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	38	3	38	0	0	1	13
The teaching is good at this school	3	38	4	50	1	13	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	3	38	4	50	1	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	38	4	50	1	13	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)	3	38	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	3	38	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	50	3	38	1	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	5	63	2	25	0	0	1	13

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).

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.



14 December 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Loxley Hall School, Uttoxeter, ST14 8RS

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for making our visit extremely interesting and enjoyable. We found that your school is outstanding. Many aspects of your personal development are outstanding, including how safe you feel and how you adopt healthy lifestyles. We also found that the care, guidance and support, and the curriculum that you receive are outstanding.

We were particularly impressed by the farm and the types of support you receive from the school's partners. However, your attendance is too low and those of you who can should try to attend school more often. I know this is sometimes difficult because of a variety of reasons, but the more you attend school, the more you will learn and make progress in your work and improve your chance of future success. The progress you make in your lessons is good and the teaching is also good. Your behaviour is good and it clearly improves over the time that you are in the school. We were also impressed by the way the school is led and how the school's focus is always on how to re-engage you in education and help you to manage your own behaviours more successfully.

We identified some areas of the school's work which need further improvement. We have asked the headteacher to use the examples of the best teaching in the school as a model to improve all the teaching to outstanding. We have asked him to think of even more ways to help improve your attendance. We have also asked the Chair of the Governing Body to make sure that governors are regularly attending school to see its work at first hand. Finally, we have asked the school to organise opportunities for you to meet with people from cultures different to your own.

Once again, thank you very much for the time you spent with us during the visit and we would like to wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

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