

Short Stay School for Norfolk

The Locksley School, Locksley Road, Norwich, NR4 6LG

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in the core subjects taught at the school; English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good and the opportunities for some pupils to learn in alternative settings has been carefully tailored to meet their needs and raise aspirations.
- Teaching is usually good and occasionally outstanding because staff adapt work in lessons according to pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils feel well supported by the good relationships with staff which help them focus on making good progress in their work.
- Pupils learn to behave well while at the school because they usually receive very skilled support and guidance from staff.
- The Executive headteacher has successfully led a senior team to drive continued improvements in teaching and learning during significant changes to the structure and level of staffing at the school.
- The management committee has an increasingly good understanding of the effectiveness of the bases as well as the school as a whole. They are well prepared for taking on the full responsibility of a governing body in April 2013.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils make the highest levels of progress across all subjects in all the bases.
- At times teaching is not sufficiently adapted to meet all the needs of pupils so that every pupil is given a good level of challenge.
- The strategies used to help pupils understand and manage their own behaviour differ across the school and some are more successful than others. The analysis of the improvements in the pupils' behaviour remains individual to different bases and there is not a consistent overview across the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 28 lessons across all six bases of the Short Stay School which span Norfolk. This included joint observations with senior leaders. Additional information was gathered from short observations across a range of one to one coaching sessions and small group work as well as an assembly and informal times of the school day.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, four representatives of the management committee and a representative of the local authority. They spoke to three parents, one who was visiting the school and two who requested a phone call. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from one of the partnership organisations who work with the school. Inspectors talked informally with pupils and heard some read within their lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised progress information, assessment records, the minutes of the meetings of the management committee, the school development plans and evaluations, and analysed pupils' work and carried out some more detailed case studies.
- The inspectors took account of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Janet Thompson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Godfrey Bancroft

Additional Inspector

Mary Hinds

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Short Stay School is a large pupil referral unit which provides education for pupils with a wide range of different needs from across Norfolk. Usually places are short term before pupils move on to another school or into further education, training or employment.
- The majority of pupils have been permanently excluded from their mainstream school. Other pupils include those who require education integrated with therapeutic support from other services. The school also provides outreach support to mainstream schools to help reduce the risk of pupils being excluded. The school provides education for pupils who are on the roll of mainstream schools but who have medical needs that mean they are currently unable to attend their own school. This includes education within hospital.
- The school operates from six main bases: The Brooklands School serves the east of the county; The Douglas Bader School serves the north of the county; The Locksley School serves the central area and the south of the county and The Rosebery School serves the west of the county. The Compass and Earthsea School offer therapeutic provisions for pupils across Norfolk.
- Numbers on roll vary considerably across the year and the vast majority attend for no more than 18 months. Usually, the majority of pupils are in Key Stage 4 and around three quarters of the pupils are boys. At the time of the inspection a quarter of the pupils had a statement of special educational need including nearly all the pupils at The Compass.
- A large proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for certain groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after. Approximately one tenth of pupils attending the school are looked after, including those who attend Earthsea School.
- Pupils have different timetables from each other so that they can learn subjects and vocational skills that are of interest. There are approximately 30 organisations that help the school to provide these opportunities. A group of 20 pupils remain on the roll of the school but attend City College in Norwich.
- The Short Stay School for Norfolk is under-going significant changes in structure and governance in line with changes to requirements and guidance for pupil referral units. From 1 April 2013 it will no longer be a local authority service but will have a fully delegated budget and the management committee will become a governing body with full accountability for the outcomes of the pupils, performance management of staff and the budget.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement so that more pupils make outstanding progress by making sure all staff provide work that is precisely matched to the needs of the pupils and which is swiftly adapted according to their responses within lessons.
- Ensure all pupils are given the very best support to understand and manage their own behaviour by:
 - making sure all staff have a good understanding of best practice in this area
 - establishing a whole school system of recording so that evaluation of improvements in behaviour and effort is as robust across the school as it is for attainment and progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils usually make good progress across the subjects including in reading, writing and mathematics. When pupils start at the school the progress they make is slower, but this soon speeds up. The intense focus from staff on improving achievement is helping to increase pupils' progress and for many it is faster than that expected nationally.
- Attainment across the school is below that expected for pupils in each age group but more and more pupils are reaching levels nearer to those expected for their age after a short time at the school.
- While skills for reading and writing are not always taught in a consistent way for all age groups across the school, expectations of pupils' work are high, pupils are well taught and make good progress. The school helps reluctant pupils become more motivated to read and there are some who enjoy a wide range of books.
- Pupils with statements of special educational needs often make very good progress. For those attending the therapeutic provisions, progress is very strong because of the careful balance between therapy and education.
- Pupils take pride in their work and in the best examples pupils' work shows great effort and excellent progress.
- Last year boys made more progress than girls in English and mathematics however girls' progress is increasing and is now very similar to that made by boys.
- The progress made by pupils who are eligible to benefit from pupil premium funding is often faster than expected nationally, but is a little more mixed than for other groups at the school. Actions taken by the school, particularly around attendance, are helping to ensure these pupils make the same amount of progress as others at the school. Pupils who are looked after make good progress at Earthsea School and in other bases if they attend the school long enough to have a few months settling in period.
- Pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 who have been permanently excluded from previous schools are successfully split into two groups, known as 'Engagement' and 'Core'. All pupils make good progress in reading writing, communication and mathematics including those attending City College. Many of those in 'Core' also successfully return to mainstream schools while those from the 'Engagement' groups also succeed in gaining more vocational skills.
- Two thirds of the pupils who start in Key Stage 1, 2 or 3 successfully return to mainstream school and the majority continue to be successful. Other pupils move on to more specialist provision.
- In Key Stage 4, few pupils return to mainstream school but most successfully move on to further education, employment or training. While the school ensures they help all pupils to secure a place in further education or training when they leave at the end of Year 11 there are a few who do not sustain their placements after a few months.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Positive relationships between staff and pupils and a sustained focus on learning help to ensure teaching is successful.
- In the first few weeks at the school, pupils follow a carefully designed programme to help staff find out what pupils already know and where they need some extra support. The programme also finds out if pupils have any specific difficulties that need to be addressed and how they prefer to learn.
- Learning is good and outstanding when teachers use the information about pupils well. In these lessons staff plan work and adapt activities so that different pupils can learn at different levels according to their needs. There is some excellent teaching where skilled teachers used very individual approaches to ensure all pupils could make outstanding progress, this was especially evident at the Douglas Bader School and for the few pupils in Key Stage 2 at Locksley School.
- When teaching is most successful, staff communicate well with each other and the pupils. They make sure they help pupils engage in activities, but also give them time to think and work things out so that they can complete the work for themselves. Activities are designed to be engaging and promote spiritual and cultural development.
- Many teachers plan carefully structured opportunities for pupils to work and support each other in lessons. This helps pupils to develop social skills and to be considerate and accept the views of others.
- There is a small proportion of weaker teaching where staff do not spend enough time finding out about what pupils already know and where the information provided is not used to adapt work accurately enough. In these lessons the work given to pupils does not provide enough challenge or the right amount of support.
- The teaching of reading is stronger and more consistent with younger pupils than the teaching of reading for older pupils. The school has identified this weakness and following whole school training more staff are using a similar approach when teaching reading to older pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- Pupils' behaviour usually improves significantly during their time at the school.
- The approaches to behaviour used by staff are based on a common policy of respect, safety, hard work and cooperation. Pupils respond to the support which helps them to make more appropriate choices and understand the consequences of some of their actions. Many staff are highly skilled in these approaches.
- There are a few staff who are not as skilled at managing inappropriate behaviour as others and who do not share the same high expectations. This was observed more at the Rosebery School than in other bases.
- The few parents who spoke to inspectors were extremely complimentary about the support pupils receive from staff at the school. They valued the positive and respectful relationships that staff develop with pupils.
- When there is some low level disruption this is usually because teachers are not making sure all

pupils' needs are being addressed in the lesson.

- The joint therapy and education support for pupils attending The Compass is very effective in helping them to understand and manage some of their complex needs so that they can move on successfully to the next stage in their education. Similarly the more specialist approaches used at Earthsea School are highly effective in helping pupils succeed.
- Pupils make good progress in understanding how to keep themselves safe. They feel confident that the school takes action when bullying takes place. Staff effectively promote a sense of respect for others and it is clear from records that any racism and homophobia is challenged. When incidents do occur, appropriate action is taken for all the pupils involved. Incidents decrease rapidly as pupils become familiar with the expectations of the school.
- The vast majority of pupils who were previously poor attenders at school do attend more frequently. The adaptations made to the timetables for individual pupils are an important factor in helping them to attend more frequently.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher, supported by other leaders, has made sure the focus for improvement at the school has been on raising pupils' achievement. This focus has driven development planning across the school and even in difficult times with a significantly reducing budget, improvements in achievement and teaching have continued.
- Changes to provision are informed by very careful analysis of the progress made by pupils at the bases and across the school. Actions taken make sure any discrimination is tackled and all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- A few members of the senior team are gaining skills in monitoring teaching and learning but occasionally still focus too much on the attention pupils are giving to an activity rather than what the pupils are actually learning.
- Pupils' behaviour and social skills are checked in each of the bases but there is not a consistent approach across the school to help whole school analysis.
- The school uses a large number of organisations to offer different courses. This helps to make sure pupils are keen to attend and learn. There is rigorous quality assurance of all the provision attended by pupils on the roll of the school. This includes initial visits and checks and a clear service level agreement with the organisations as well as regular, frequent follow up visits by key workers who make sure pupils are attending, learning and making the progress expected by the school.
- The school has good systems to check on the quality of teaching. Staff have targets to bring about improvements in pupils' progress. Training for staff is carefully focused on priorities both for the school and individuals, while making sure there is good value for money. Most staff, including those who are new, feel well supported. However, a few feel they are not always given access to the professional development they want.
- The local authority reorganised the pupil referral units in September 2011. The decision to establish an executive headteacher across all the previously separate bases was to help drive improvement and raise pupils' achievement. This has been an effective strategy and pupils' achievement has improved. This academic year, most bases have been visited by the school

intervention service and reports provide some useful baseline information but lack challenge for the school as a whole.

- The local authority uses the school to provide education for pupils who are not medically fit enough to attend their own schools. These pupils remain on the roll of their original school and are not on the roll of the Short Stay School for Norfolk. The local authority has based funding on minimum hours for this group and as such does not fulfil the duty to provide as near to full-time education as a child's health allows.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The management committee structure and membership has changed during this academic year. The changes have reduced duplication and ensured more effective systems for bringing together information about different bases to inform whole school decisions. The committee analyse information about pupils' progress and check how well different groups, such as boys and girls or those eligible to benefit from the pupil premium funding, achieve, to make sure that no group does less well than others. The current committee have been effective in supporting the development of the new structure of the school to be put in place from 1 April 2013. Previously, officers from Children's Services at the local authority have been responsible for line management of the executive headteacher and corporate arrangements for recruitment to other posts have been required. The management committee are well informed and are well-placed to move to be a governing body and take over the responsibility for checking on pupils' progress, and the effectiveness of the school as well as managing the performance of staff.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137490
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	400340

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	281
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Philip Harris
Headteacher	Des Reynolds
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01603 508520
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