



New Woodlands School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100763
LEA Lewisham LEA
Inspection number 276378
Inspection dates 16 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector Anne Berger

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special	School address	49 Shroffold Road
School category	Community special		Downham
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Bromley BR1 5PD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02083149911
Number on roll	52	Fax number	02083143475
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Gillian Harewood
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr D H Harper

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

New Woodlands provides an integrated school and service for primary-aged pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD) in Lewisham. Work has just begun to extend the provision to pupils from secondary schools in the borough. The pupils are referred directly from mainstream schools to the outreach service. If more intensive work is necessary, the local authority inclusion officer and the headteacher become involved. They work alongside the school improvement advisers to plan further strategies to try and ensure the pupils can be supported in mainstream. Sometimes they decide that a short-term placement at New Woodlands School would be most suitable and this is done without the need for a statement. Mainstream schools fund a proportion of the places at New Woodlands and are key stakeholders in the school.

Few pupils have statements of special educational needs though many are vulnerable. A high proportion are looked after, or supported, by social services and health services. Most have not in the past reached their potential. Many are of average ability overall but have significant speech and language difficulties. A high proportion of pupils have dyslexia. Also, many pupils referred have fallen behind in their basic skills because they have poor attendance and levels of concentration.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school and service improves the life chances of many vulnerable children. It is leading the way as a centre of excellence for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and is now able to offer its outstanding practice to the whole Borough. Many more pupils than those on the school's roll benefit from its work and the provision is outstanding value for money.

Collaboration with mainstream schools, who willingly fund placements at the school, is a key to the school's success. The headteacher has forged a partnership of equals. Together problems are resolved to the benefit of the pupils.

Creativity and innovation are a hallmark of everything the school and service does. They have found new and better ways of making sure all pupils get the help they need as soon as their problems become evident by making sure that procedures do not get in the way of provision. The outreach teacher begins working with the pupil and class teacher to find out more about why the pupil is having emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. After a period of assessment, swift action is taken to re-engage the pupil with learning. This is usually very effective. The early intervention prevents permanent exclusions, which are now a rarity in the local authority's primary schools.

Where additional specialist help is required the pupil may attend New Woodlands School for a short intensive programme of support. During their stay these pupils learn how to behave in a classroom setting. The curriculum is carefully planned to make sure there are many opportunities for pupils to learn to take turns, share and work with others, and to manage their feelings more appropriately. The pupils are encouraged to resolve disagreements and take responsibility for what they have done. A pupil said, 'The 'chill out' room helps me talk things through rather than lash out'. Another boy was pleased to add, 'The school gives me another chance if I make a mistake. Teachers help me sort things out.' The pupils learn how to be kind and make better relationships with their friends and adults.

At the same time there is a very effective focus on improving the pupils' basic skills. They make rapid progress in this area. The majority have fallen seriously behind in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills before coming to the school, but during their time at New Woodlands most make up the lost ground. On leaving the school many remain slightly behind in their reading and writing skills and the school is always looking for ways to improve further. It aims, for example, for more pupils to achieve Level 4 in English by the end of Year 6. The new approaches being discussed to change the language and reading development programmes are well placed to achieve this end.

The outstanding progress that the pupils make is mainly due to the very high levels of attention given and good teaching. 'If they can't learn the way we teach.... then we must teach them the way they learn'. This school motto is displayed at every turn and all staff find ways of making this aim a reality. They set very clear expectations for both learning and behaviour and constantly check that these expectations are met. Teachers know exactly what pupils can do and plan the next steps of learning very

well. A parent told us, 'My son has come a long way in this school in the two months he has been here. It is all down to the good teaching'.

The pupils say how much they enjoy the active lessons where they can get involved with their work quickly. Occasionally, when they have to sit still for whole class teaching sessions, they can become distracted. However, teachers are sensitive to this and are trying out methods to reduce the time the pupils are expected to listen quietly.

Over 75% of pupils are successfully returned to mainstream school. All pupils are followed up regularly by the outreach service and any further problems are resolved swiftly. For example, one pupil, who was disruptive during unstructured times, complained that he had no-one to play with. The outreach teacher worked with the class on finding out why this was happening and helping them find ways to include the pupil in their games. He now has a playground buddy who makes sure he can join in. Over the last 3 years no pupil has had to return to the New Woodlands School because their placements have broken down.

The school itself funds psychologist support to assist in making provision for the full range of needs the pupils have. Recently, the mental health and social services have been more able to respond to immediate requests for support.

However, there is still much to do to find ways of improving the children's health, housing and family life. There is a paucity of speech and language and occupational therapy and many children require further support to promote their emotional health and well-being. Family circumstances make it hard for some children to stay healthy and the school attendance rate suffers. It is better than in many similar schools but, at 87%, it not as good as everyone would like. Despite this staff are 'on a mission to help'. They provide bedding, clothes and food where they can. Everyone goes the extra mile to make sure the pupils are in a position to learn.

Parents, pupils, staff and the wider community are asked for their views regularly, problems are discussed openly and imaginative solutions are found. Everyone is constantly reviewing and improving what is done. A member of staff commented, 'We even change the good things to get better'.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Children

I am writing to tell you about what I found when I came to visit you. I really enjoyed my day. It was wonderful to see you all so happy, working hard and learning so much. It is a great school and Mr Harper and the staff all do an excellent job. I was particularly pleased to hear and see the effort you make to sort out problems and learn to make friends. You told me how important the chill out room is to help you talk about problems. Kevin works very hard and helps you all a lot.

Your teachers plan exciting and interesting things for you to do. I am glad you all appreciate that. At New Woodlands you do lots of activities to improve your reading and I saw some of you really trying hard to sound out the letters. In some literacy lessons I noticed that you found it hard to concentrate. Your teachers are going to try and find more ways to help you with this. You also have to do your bit and do as you are told and sit still.

Those of you in mainstream schools have very good help from the staff from New Woodlands who come to visit. They talk to your class teachers and find ways to improve your behaviour. Some of your parents wrote to tell us how pleased they were with the school. We hope you will take this letter home so they can read what we found.

Yours sincerely

Ann Berger

HMI