



Delamere School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106394
LEA Trafford
Inspection number 277548
Inspection dates 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Caroline Broomhead HMI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Irlam Road
School category	Community special		Flixton
Age range of pupils	2 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M41 6AP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7475893
Number on roll	66	Fax number	0161 7472960
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Alan Lord
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs S Huddart

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Delamere School is a community special school for pupils aged 2 to 11 years with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism. There are 66 pupils on roll, including 11 in the nursery, who attend part time. Many pupils have additional sensory and physical disabilities and an increasing number have high dependency medical needs which require additional support. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. An average proportion of pupils have free school meals, and a similar proportion have English as an additional language. Pupils are drawn from across the area of Trafford and a very small number are in the care of the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Delamere is an outstanding school. The warm, welcoming atmosphere is evident from the entrance and permeates the whole of the school. At Delamere every child is precious. Professionals from many disciplines work seamlessly together to provide high standards of care and education. As a result the children, including those in the Foundation Stage, make good, and often very good progress in their learning and personal development. Teaching is good with some outstanding features and the curriculum is suitably tailored to meet the pupils' individual needs. However, in a few lessons the pace is too slow and this limits opportunities for pupils to develop their broader subject knowledge. Excellent teamwork and positive relationships between adults and children are at the heart of why the children enjoy school so much. Leadership of the school is outstanding. The headteacher and her deputy have established high expectations and set clear direction. Their challenging yet supportive style has encouraged a culture where honest self-review is routine with the result that staff have an accurate view of the school's strengths and its priorities for development. However, the school's plans do not make clear the expected improvements in children's learning. The governors know the school well and very effectively support and challenge it to achieve high standards. Parents speak highly of the school and the difference it has made to their children's lives. The school provides good value for money. It has excellent capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that a brisk pace is maintained in all lessons so that children make the most of the time available to develop their understanding and skills across all subjects.
- Ensure that the school's plans for development make clear the expected improvements to children's learning and achievements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children enter school with prior attainment within the P levels of the National Curriculum, which is well below that expected of the majority of pupils of the same age. The school accurately judges that all children, including those in the Foundation Stage, make at least good progress in their learning, and make particularly great strides in their social and communication skills. The children begin to learn the very early skills needed for reading and writing and some go on to be able to speak in simple sentences and others to write their first name. They routinely develop and practise their skills throughout the school day and become increasingly confident in the use of signs, symbols and pictures to help them communicate their thoughts and needs to others around them. They also begin to learn how their day is structured and this reduces their anxiety about what is expected of them. The older children show how much they have matured when they independently find their way around school and when they select and eat their lunch and helpfully clear away after themselves. Many children

experience severe mobility difficulties and it is a joy to everyone when some begin to walk, albeit with some assistance initially.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children's personal development is outstanding. Parents are delighted with the progress their children make. Typical of their comments are, 'my child's needs have been met with diligence, expertise and tremendous care and my hopes and expectations have been exceeded'. Personal, social and health education pervades all aspects of school life. Healthy eating is successfully encouraged, particularly as meal times play a significant part in each child's school day. Behaviour is very good and children clearly enjoy their time in school. Their attendance is good and medical difficulties account for most of the absences.

The children have a sense of achievement and pride in their work and all thrive in the positive and happy atmosphere. They are encouraged to develop an awareness of different cultures, for instance through participating in excellent music celebrations especially those within the local community.

The children are able to contribute to the community through joining in fundraising events and by raising the profile of disability within the immediate area. For example, a local cafe has produced a pictorial menu for the children when they visit. The progress the children make in improving their communication and social skills makes a huge contribution to their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The inspection confirmed that teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. The expertise of different professionals is harnessed into a holistic, child-centred approach to planning, teaching and assessment. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now good. In particular the increased use of information and communication technology is bringing the curriculum to life for many more children, and enabling them to have more control of their learning. The excellent relationships between staff and children create a relaxed environment in which children feel secure. Carefully targeted support helps them to remain on task and challenges them to try their best. The children steadily achieve the small steps they need to take towards greater independence. The best lessons include brisk pace which captures the children's attention and imagination, at the same time allowing them time to respond. Activities are carefully planned so that the children can investigate and explore and derive the maximum benefit from each session. Where teaching could be improved it is because time is not used wisely, for example when snack time takes longer than it needs to and limits the time children have to develop their broader subject knowledge and skills.

Children's individual targets are both realistic and challenging. In partnership with parents, each child's progress is continually reviewed and programmes are adjusted accordingly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In the Foundation Stage it focuses well on stimulating children to learn through experience, discovery and play. In Key Stages 1 and 2 an individualised and purposeful curriculum is achieved through the combination of a broad range of subjects together with an extensive programme for personal development. A particularly successful focus for the curriculum is on extending children's communication and social skills so that they can develop the confidence and ability to make choices. Much of the work in other subjects is around topics that interest and motivate, for example, learning through sensory stories.

Few opportunities are missed to enrich the curriculum. There are close links with local primary and secondary schools to which some pupils make weekly visits and these are highly valued by families. The school is rightly proud of the many opportunities it gives children to go on residential visits and take part in performances, assemblies, and frequent trips, often linked to topics being studied. A professional music group, for instance, is working with all children to help them express themselves through music, gesture and song. Children with complex needs have their lives greatly enriched through approaches that stimulate all of their senses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding feature of the school. Parents express total confidence in the school's ability to keep their children safe and happy. All members of staff have the children's welfare at heart; they know them well and are sensitive to individual needs. Staff are particularly well trained in moving and handling children who depend upon them. Dignity is preserved at all times through sensitive management of intimate and personal care. Assessment is comprehensive and reports include detailed information about children's abilities and future needs. A highly successful team of therapists and nurses work well together and with other staff to ensure that children's complex needs are met. Extensive cooperation with a range of agencies ensures that children and their families are offered support well beyond school issues. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are well prepared for moving on to the next class or school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is extremely well led by the headteacher and her deputy. The firmly established culture of self-review and continuous improvement is built upon a collaborative approach to developing and valuing each person's expertise. Senior managers routinely monitor the quality of provision and provide constructive and

supportive feedback which encourages staff to reflect on their practice and to keep a vision for further improvement. Recent restructuring has created much valued time for teachers to plan together. Subject coordinators have clear responsibilities and accountability for their areas and suitable plans are being made for them to monitor their subjects across classes. This is a school which knows its strengths and what it needs to do to improve further; however, the criteria which it uses to measure its success does not focus well enough on the expected impact on pupils' learning. Managers are routinely collating data about pupils' attainment and encouraging teachers to use this more effectively. There are rigorous procedures in place to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils and staff. The governors are regular visitors to the school and know it well. They have a deep understanding of the children's complex needs and expect the best for each child. They take their responsibilities seriously and keep themselves up to date with regular training. Parents are very supportive of the school and proud of how eager their children are to come to school and how well they have progressed. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to continue to improve.

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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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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	2	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	NA
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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school earlier this week.

These are the main findings from the inspection:

- we think that Delamere is a very good school; it cares for you very well and we know that you enjoy coming to school and are disappointed when you are ill and cannot attend
- you make good progress at school and your parents and teachers are proud of what you achieve; your singing is a joy to listen to and we know you love playing musical instruments
- the teachers and other staff work very well together; they make your lessons interesting and plan lots of practical activities which you enjoy and they keep a careful record of how well you are doing
- those of you in year 6 will no doubt be looking forward to going on the residential to Bendregg this summer, having heard what a great time others have had in the past; we are sure you will try lots of new outdoor activities and come back feeling fitter and stronger.

These are the main points which the school should improve:

- make sure that time is used well in lessons so that you can learn more about all the different subjects
- show how the school's plans will lead to you achieving even higher standards at school.

Once again, thank you for your support with this inspection. You and your staff can be proud of what you have achieved and we wish you every success for the future.