



Lydgate School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107801
LEA Kirklees
Inspection number 277846
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 4 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Jeffery Plumb CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Kirkroyds Lane
School category	Community special		New Mill
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		Holmfirth, West Yorkshire HD9 1LS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01484 222 484
Number on roll	80	Fax number	01484 222 485
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs J Poulain
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr Martin Ord

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lydgate School is designated as a community school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, but now caters for pupils with complex needs. The socio-economic background of pupils is varied; 40% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is above the national average, but none are at an early stage of learning English. The school has achieved the Sport England Sportsmark Award and is working towards the Healthy School Award. The provision for special educational needs within the local authority is undergoing a review, and this school is part of the phase 2 programme for refurbishment and extension; it is in the process of being re-designated as a school for pupils with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, a judgement which concurs with the school's evaluation of itself. It provides good value for money. Effective partnership between education and health service providers ensures that pupils with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well, particularly in reading, mathematics, and design and technology. The promotion of pupils' economic well-being is outstanding. Extra-curricular provision is excellent. Although the curriculum is good overall, there is a weakness in the provision for science because of the lack of specialist accommodation and this restricts pupils' progress. Teaching and learning are good overall, but there is a small amount of inadequate teaching. The system for tracking pupils' progress does not focus sharply enough on the small steps of progress made by pupils with the most complex needs. The quality of care is good. Pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude to learning. Behaviour is good. Older pupils benefit from inclusion experiences in college.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has successfully led the school through a period of turbulence and uncertainty linked to the reorganisation of special educational needs within Kirklees. Developments of the building were put on hold during a lengthy period whilst the school considered being part of a private public partnership refurbishment/extension plan, which did not materialise. This has resulted in a school building that looks tired. However, immediate plans to use specially allocated funds to improve the accommodation, linked to clear priorities to raise achievement, mean that the capacity for improvement is good in the immediate future. Governance is satisfactory, although governors are not sufficiently involved at an early stage in school planning and their challenge is not always sharp enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make learning more challenging for pupils in those few lessons where teaching is inadequate.
- Work in partnership with the Local Authority to improve the accommodation and resources for the teaching of science in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Develop a tracking system to show the small steps of progress made by pupils with the most complex needs so that sharp targets can be set to raise their achievement.
- Train governors to be more involved in whole school planning at an earlier stage than at present.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Measured against pupils' starting points, achievement is good but most pupils work at levels significantly below those in mainstream schools. Progress in English and mathematics is good throughout the school. Gains in reading are rapid because of the effective strategies in place to support pupils' learning in this subject. By Year 11, many pupils achieve creditable GCSE passes in mathematics. Although satisfactory

overall, pupils' progress in science investigations is impeded by lack of specialist accommodation and resources.

Design and technology is a strong subject because pupils are enthused by making furniture; they make very good progress in this subject and GCSE results are good. Access to vocational courses in Key Stage 4 promotes pupils' independence and gives them good work related skills. This equips them to access quality courses at college when they leave school. Progress in religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) is good throughout the school, demonstrating a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils with additional and complex needs make good progress because of the good support they receive. Their mobility and control improves and they make rapid gains in confidence. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve equally as well as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They say: 'Learning is fun'. Attendance is good: a significant achievement for pupils who did not attend well enough in their previous schools. Behaviour is good and pupils care for one another.

Pupils contribute well to their annual reviews. Their voice is also heard and acted upon through a vibrant school council. Through this forum, they have made decisions about 'healthy foods' to be sold in the school tuck shop and have played an important part in instigating lunchtime clubs. The school successfully promotes pupils' economic well-being through enterprise projects. Pupils' awareness of the world of work is outstanding. Social skills development lies at the heart of this school and promotes pupils' dignity and independence. Moral and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils understand how to stay healthy by drinking plenty of water, eating healthily and taking regular exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The best teaching is characterised by planning to meet the needs of every pupil in the class. In such lessons, the pace of teaching is cracking; activities are enjoyable and important life skills are developed. The teaching of reading, mathematics, and design and technology is consistently good. In reading and mathematics lessons, teachers plan specific learning outcomes for every child, based on the targets in their individual education plans.

Science teaching for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 is impeded by the lack of a specialist room and a deficiency in resources. These deficiencies adversely affect the range of practical activities for these pupils. The pace of teaching in the small number of inadequate lessons is pedestrian and lacking in challenge. This, together with weak

planning, slows learning. Marking is variable. In the best practice, teachers mark pupils' work with them and tell them what they need to do to improve. But on occasions where comments on pupils' work are not specific and not shared with them on a one-to-one basis, pupils are unclear about what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. Flexible planning ensures it meets a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Statutory requirements are met. It promotes pupils' awareness of economic well-being exceptionally well. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme is very good. However, there is a weakness in the provision for science due to the lack of a specialist room and this impedes the investigations carried out in Key Stages 3 and 4.

Tailor-made curriculum programmes, based on advice from health professionals, are excellent and help pupils with physical difficulties to gain independence in movement. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding and contributes effectively to pupils' interest in and enjoyment of learning. The opportunities for outdoor pursuits contribute to their fitness and development of team skills. For example, a Year 9 pupil said: 'I am excited about walking Hadrian's Wall in a few weeks time'. Effective use is made of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care is good. Health professionals and teachers work together effectively to meet the emotional and physical needs of the pupils. Partnership with parents/carers is good. They are very appreciative of all that the school does for their children, and say: 'The school provides our children with many and varied opportunities'. Guidance provided to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work is variable. The system for tracking progress does not show the very small steps of progress made by pupils with the most complex needs and this is a deficiency. It does not provide sharp enough information to inform planning to raise achievement for those pupils who make very slight improvements with their writing and in mathematics. Career guidance for older pupils is good. They are very well supported as they move on to college.

Robust arrangements for child protection and safeguarding children are in place. Risk assessments are thorough. There are clear protocols for procedures such as lifting pupils. Pupils say that they feel very safe and this helps them to learn in a calm environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, in post for four terms, has successfully steered the school through a period of uncertainty linked to the

reorganisation of special educational needs within Kirklees. The school is now in the local authority's next phase for refurbishment and extension. Throughout this time his clarity of vision, which focuses on the highest achievement and enjoyment for all pupils, has been shared by all staff. The senior leadership team are clear about their roles, and subject leaders are effective in driving forward improvements in the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants support each other well and work as an effective team to provide a good quality of education for the pupils.

Effective systems are in place for checking performance and taking action to improve. This is a self-analytical school. Through its self-evaluation, it has identified the need to improve its system for tracking pupils' progress. The school improvement plan focuses on raising pupils' achievement, but a longer-term plan has been put on the back burner during the local review of special educational needs, and the governors have not been involved early enough in the process of setting priorities. The school is now well poised to move forward with the longer term plan. Financial planning is prudent. The governing body is supportive but its challenge is not always sufficiently sharp.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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	2	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?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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	3	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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thanks for welcoming us as visitors to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and teaching assistants.

What I like most about your school

- The good progress you make in reading, mathematics, and design and technology because of the good teaching you receive in these subjects.
- The excellent provision for extra-curricular activities and the ways in which your awareness of work-related skills and physical fitness are developed.
- The enjoyment you express in your learning and your good behaviour.
- The quality of care and the way in which your head teacher leads and manages your school.

What I have asked your school to do now

- Improve the small amount of teaching that does not challenge you to learn as well as you can.
- Improve the room and equipment for science.
- Measure more accurately the small steps of progress made by those of you who find learning the most difficult so that you know what to do to make progress.
- Help the school governors to be more involved in planning your education.

Please sustain your love for learning and support your teachers in enabling Lydgate to become an excellent school.