



# Fosse Way School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109405  
**LEA** Bath and North East Somerset  
**Inspection number** 278190  
**Inspection dates** 16 January 2006 to 16 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Dobbins AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Longfellow Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Radstock
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16		BA3 3AL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01761 412198
<b>Number on roll</b>	120	<b>Fax number</b>	01761 411751
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Marion Bodman
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 January 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Gregory

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 16 January 2006 - 16 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278190
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school for pupils with mild and severe, profound and complex learning difficulties is larger than most equivalent schools. It provides regional specialist provision for the local authority and increasingly so for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) from four neighbouring local authorities. In September 2005, it opened provision for students in Years 12 and 13. There are 94 boys and 26 girls, all having statements of special educational needs. Almost all are from White British backgrounds. There is five-days-a-week residential provision for 10 pupils. The school recently gained Technology Specialist Status (September 2005), provides outreach help to local schools and those in adjoining authorities, and arranges national conferences on teaching pupils with ASD. The school is currently in the middle of a £1.4 million building programme as a result of gaining specialist school status and plans are well advanced to follow this with a £4.5 million building programme using money gained from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The last full inspection was in January 2000, but Her Majesty's Inspectors conducted a short inspection in January 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Fosse Way School is an outstanding school and provides excellent value for money. The school is too modest in judging its effectiveness only as good. The school's leadership and management are outstanding, as is the school's capacity for improvement. The headteacher is fully supported by an equivalently good team of senior leaders. Collectively, they inspire staff to work to the best of their capabilities and this results in pupils gaining a very high quality of education. Teaching is outstanding. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress and achieve extremely well over a curriculum that prepares them very well for the next stages of their education and for life beyond school. School leaders and governors rightly recognise that the school has made very good progress, since the last full inspection. For example, pupils make better progress because teaching is better and the care and guidance offered pupils is much improved. However, leaders do not make enough use of data in showing how good the school has become. Designation as a specialist technology school is seen as reflective of the high quality of the provision.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision**

### **Grade: 1**

The boarding provision makes an important contribution to the learning and the personal and social development of the 10 weekly boarders. The links between the school and residential setting are excellent. Staff who work in the school also work in the residential setting. This helps the two settings provide substantial support for the work of each other. The last annual report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) identified exemplary practice and only minor issues relating to the meeting of the national care standards.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- sharpen the school's review processes by measuring the effect of recent developments when planning for the future and when judging overall effectiveness.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils make outstanding progress as they move through the school. Most fully meet the annual targets that are identified in their statements of special educational needs. All pupils, irrespective of gender, cause or severity of their learning difficulties, do well against the targets set for them. The gains they make are linked closely to the seriousness of their learning difficulties. Those who gain most move from low levels on the P Scales when they enter school, to National Curriculum Level 5 when they leave school. In doing so, they gain success in a wide range of nationally accredited awards, including passing in some subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) up to grade C. Others with the most severe difficulties make

significant progress through the P Scales. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and those with multiple and complex learning needs make outstanding progress in communicating and in developing their social skills so that they become as independent as possible when they leave school.

The performance of the nine pupils who left Year 11 in 2005 comfortably exceeded that predicted for them from their national test results in Year 6. The DfES analysis showed the school to be in the top 25% of schools nationally for adding value to learning.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in lessons and in discussions with them. Many see it as the 'best school I've been to'. One pupil commented that the school had 'changed my life around, I'm now so calm'. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in many ways, including their excellent attitudes to their work, their good behaviour and attendance.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Spiritual and cultural development are very effectively promoted; moral and social development is exceptional. All staff are excellent role models with very high expectations of behaviour. The very strong relationships they establish with pupils mean that pupils approach them readily to speak on any matter. Lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) help, as does 'circle time' and taking part in anti-bullying and anti-racist projects. The consistent way in which the behaviour programme is implemented provides clear guidelines on what is right and wrong and what is acceptable. The regular visits to the local community and residential trips are excellent opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their good behaviour and to gain in self-confidence and self-esteem because of this. When behaviour is challenging, staff deal with it quickly, fairly and very effectively.

Pupils learn the importance of leading healthy lifestyles by making suitable choices about food, drink and leisure activities. They take part, regularly, in a wide range of physical activities and make very good use of the excellent swimming pool. They develop a sense of corporate responsibility by participating in the school council. Essential skills for living such as shopping, budgeting and personal independence are addressed very well through the curriculum.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Most lessons are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge or are based on long and medium-term plans created by subject specialists. In each class, the range of pupils' learning needs and capabilities is very wide. Nevertheless, teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils very well and

are expert at using many strategies especially developed to teach pupils who have precise requirements for learning. They are expert at using pictures, signs and symbols and the special strategy for teaching pupils with ASD. Consequently, irrespective of the cause or level of their learning needs, all pupils gain equivalent access to lesson tasks and make equivalent progress towards their targets.

The strong relationships pupils have with staff help them be confident learners who are unafraid of making a mistake and eager to try out new equipment and new ways of learning. Routinely, pupils try hard to do their best because learning is fun and rewarding. They behave well and gain great enjoyment from celebrating their successes.

Since the gaining of specialist school status, staff have become much better at using new technologies such as specialist switches, modified keyboards and interactive whiteboards to promote learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is broad, well balanced and matches very well with pupils' learning and additional needs. It is better than at the time of the last full inspection. For those in Years 1 to 11, it is exceptionally well planned and meets statutory requirements. In each subject, teaching is made relevant to pupils through their own targets for learning that are derived from a commercial scheme linked with P Scale and National Curriculum levels. In each subject, progress is easily recognised as pupils gain success against their learning targets. The range of accredited awards available to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is extensive enough for every pupil to demonstrate the extent of their learning over their time at school. The curriculum is coherent because additional experiences, such as hydrotherapy, multi-sensory sessions and tutorials, link very well with learning in the subjects. Older pupils gain experiences of the adult world through the extensive programme of work-related learning.

The curriculum is extended by lunch-time clubs in art, computers, cooking and social skills, and the organised football games that take place daily are very much enjoyed by pupils. Special days, for example, in religious education, French and many aspects of design and technology, support learning well. Residential visits that include taking part in the Kilda Challenge, backpacking on Dartmoor and canoeing and staying in caravans at Swanage are very effective in helping pupils become increasingly self-confident and independent.

The curriculum for pupils in Years 12 and 13, newly established in September 2005, is developing well. It focuses on promoting independence skills to give students the competencies and confidence to be as independent as possible in seeking a good quality of life.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are cared for and supported exceptionally well. The arrangements to protect pupils' welfare and safety are extremely rigorous. Pupils feel safe at school and

confident enough to approach staff if they are worried or troubled. Staff are trained well and know the procedures to follow if they are concerned about any pupil. Statutory requirements relating to statements of special educational needs are fully met. Pupils' individual plans are excellent. They identify learning and additional needs in detail and the support required to meet these needs. Daily tutorials are valuable in dealing quickly with issues and in establishing and maintaining the very strong relationships staff have with pupils.

The targets for learning in subjects and for personal and social development, including improving behaviour, work exceptionally well. Pupils are aware of these, know what they have to do to meet them and work hard to do so. The targets are efficient in promoting learning because they are precise, detailed and reviewed regularly so that pupils do not 'mark time' waiting for the next target.

The working relationships with a range of other services, such as Connexions and many health professionals, are excellent. Guidance at pupils' transition review at Year 9 is exemplary and ensures that pupils have a detailed knowledge of what is available in the future.

The powerful impact of the support and guidance offered pupils is reflected in the change in one Year 8 pupil. His challenging behaviour was sufficient to warrant a period of exclusion. The combined efforts of staff, parents and the education welfare service resulted in the pupil taking more control of his behaviour so that he could better attend to his learning and to cooperating with others in school and the family at home.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school and the drive and determination to fully achieve that vision. Since the last full inspection, outstanding leadership has helped realise many developments. Pupils are learning better and making better progress over a wider curriculum than was the case then. Pupil numbers have increased and provision for students in Years 12 and 13 has been established. The school's expertise in dealing with pupils with ASD is being increasingly recognised, both in the region and nationally, by the attendance of teachers from many local authorities over England and Wales at the school's annual conferences on teaching pupils with ASD. The school has achieved the Investors in People award, but most importantly, it is one of a very small number of special schools to be granted specialist school status. The effect of this is already beginning to be seen throughout all the work, particularly in the improved quality of teaching. The new building, gained from specialist status money, is almost complete and includes excellent specialist teaching rooms for design and technology and for food technology. The capacity for continued improvement is outstanding.

Management is outstanding. The headteacher distributes responsibilities and expects staff to discharge them to the highest standards. Self-evaluation is recognised as an important tool in helping develop the school and its quality is good. Many detailed

records are kept on the performance of pupils and support their individual progress. Nevertheless, this wealth of data and information from other areas of work, such as how well pupils with different causes for their learning difficulties are doing, is not used well enough in checking how effective the school is in its work or in identifying further areas for development.

Governance is good, but governors do not challenge the headteacher enough to show how good the school really is. An urgent requirement from the last inspection was to make the arrival and departure of pupils safer. This has been met in full.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	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	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	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	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

We very much enjoyed our time with you and would like to thank you for talking with us and for helping us find out about your school.

We were very impressed with what we saw at your school. We think that it is among the very best of schools because:

- You like being at school and you like the staff very much, and because of this you feel safe and are happy at school.
- You behave well in lessons and around the school, and are extremely polite in the way in which you deal with each other and with visitors to the school.
- Your headteacher and the senior teachers are outstanding. They make sure that all the staff, and you, are able to do your best at all times.
- Those of you who stay at school during the week benefit very much from the very close links between the school and the residence. These help improve your learning and, especially, the way you behave and act when you are with others.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work very hard and, because you work as hard as they do, you make outstanding progress in your learning and in growing up to be responsible young people.
- What you learn in your lessons is right for you, and we like the way in which the school offers you many opportunities to visit local places and to take part in residential visits.

We are excited about how your school will improve once the new buildings are in use. We hope you will do even better in the future.