



Grange School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109735
LEA BEDFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278253
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ms. Sue Aldridge LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Halsey Road
School category	Community special		MK42 8AU
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01234 407100
Number on roll	144	Fax number	01234 407110
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Janet Bodily
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Ellen Zapiec

Age group 5 to 16	Inspection dates 14 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	Inspection number 278253
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Grange caters for pupils from 5 to 16 with special educational needs associated with moderate learning difficulties and/or autism. At present there are 144 on roll. There are no pupils in the Foundation Stage, Year 1 or Year 2. The school has a unit for pupils with autism, and makes use of a particular approach to teaching these pupils, Treatment and Education of Autism and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH). Most pupils are of secondary age. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Boys outnumber girls by two to one. Most of the pupils are white, less than one in ten is Asian and there are a few black pupils. There is a small number of traveller pupils and eleven whose home language is not English; eight pupils are in public care. When pupils enter the school their attainment is well below that of pupils of a similar age nationally. Many pupils come from families in difficult socio-economic circumstances. The Grange provides outreach services to schools in its community, and a venue for families to attend Family Learning Courses. It has links with the Education Business Partnership, Connexions, The Kempston Counsellor, a college, the health service, social services and a local charity. It also has links with the University of Carolina which oversees TEACCH training. The school is facing possible reorganisation as a special school for pupils with more complex learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Grange provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils. As a result, pupils' achievements are exceptionally good, and so is their personal development. Leadership and management are both excellent, and have secured impressive improvement since the last inspection. Although self-evaluation is highly effective and the school knows exactly what it needs to do to improve further, members of the leadership team are modest in their evaluation of how good the school is, reflecting their very high expectations. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no developments needed that are not already identified in the school's improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Although pupils do not reach the standards expected nationally, this is entirely due to the nature of their learning difficulties. Across the school, pupils make progress that is at least good and it is often very good or excellent; in Years 10 and 11 pupils' achievements are outstanding. In the national league tables showing the value added from Year 6 to Year 11, and from Year 9 to Year 11, The Grange is in the top 5% of all schools nationally, and this is excellent. The majority of pupils (71%) reach the challenging targets set for them by subject teachers. In English, 75% reach their literacy targets. Pupils entering the school in Key Stage 2 are well behind their mainstream peers. They quickly settle and start to make rapid progress. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 3, where pupils are taught by subject specialists. Last year, almost a third of pupils moved up by one National Curriculum level, and a few moved up two levels from Year 6 to Year 9. In science, 60% of pupils achieved a Level 3 or above; almost a third made one level gain and a third moved up by two levels. At this stage, pupils do particularly well in art and information and communication technology (ICT) with many reaching Level 3 and above by Year 9. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make exemplary progress. Last summer, a third gained five A-G GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) passes and 77% gained at least one A-G pass. Of the 22 pupils in Year 11, 18 were entered for GCSE examinations, and between them they achieved 68 passes. In addition there were 138 passes at Entry level, 112 AQA (Achievement and Qualifications Alliance) Unit Awards and 12 ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) Youth Award Scheme Bronze Awards. All pupils left with nationally recognised awards across a wide range of subjects. There are no differences in the achievements of boys and girls, pupils with autism, minority ethnic groups or pupils in public care. This is because the school caters most effectively for individual needs. Of those that left school in the summer of 2005 almost all went on to further education or training.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils rise magnificently to the high expectations of their work and conduct. They are expected to take active responsibility for their learning and development, and they do so. They are rightly confident that they are listened to and their views taken seriously. This empowers pupils enormously. They show considerable and justifiable pride in their achievements, enjoyment of their lessons and a well founded appreciation of the help they receive from staff. They also speak with disarming honesty of their targets for improvement. Behaviour is impeccable in lessons, around the school and with visitors. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning are apparent in their good attendance; high participation rates in extra-curricular activities show how much pupils' enjoy these. Vulnerable pupils successfully complete their education, often against considerable odds; occasionally, those who have been supported by staff through a difficult patch help pupils who are experiencing similar difficulties. Pupils with autism increase their ability to socialise and communicate with others. Those that have associated behavioural difficulties learn to understand and control their feelings of anger or frustration. Many of the secondary pupils with autism are successfully integrated into the main classes at the school and follow accredited courses alongside their peers. Pupils develop well their independence skills when they shop, plan and prepare a lunchtime meal each week. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary. Pupils have an exceptionally strong sense of their personal strengths and achievements, as well as areas that they need to improve. They are highly respectful of each others beliefs and value the differences between them. There are countless occasions when pupils are mutually supportive. Bullying and racism are not a feature of the school. Through personal, social, health and citizenship lessons pupils gain a secure understanding of the importance of personal responsibility and keeping safe and healthy. Pupils are pleased to take on responsibility within school and in the wider community. They represent their peers well on the Student Council, thus contributing to the agenda for improvement, and support local initiatives such as a campaign against vandalism in Kempston. They also raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils at the Grange grow impressively in maturity, confidence, self-esteem, social awareness and aspirations. They successfully complete work experience placements and leave school exceptionally well prepared for the next step.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers and learning support assistants are highly skilled. Teaching is at least good and is often outstanding, particularly in English, science and mathematics in Years 7 to 11. Learning support assistants (LSAs) work in an exemplary partnership to support pupils' learning. Training has empowered staff and LSAs make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning. They support individual pupils, and make detailed records of pupils'

responses and performance during those parts of lessons led by teachers. Many have good subject knowledge, so they are able to answer questions well, and pupils turn to them with the same confidence that they show in qualified teaching staff. Teaching empowers pupils as learners, and this is an outstanding feature of the school. Teachers have a thorough and accurate knowledge of pupils' skills, abilities and learning needs, and set challenging objectives for pupils to reach in lessons. Older pupils are involved most effectively in setting longer term targets for themselves; they know what levels they are at and what they need to work on to reach the next level. In lessons, pupils know what they are working towards and how they can demonstrate their success. Constructive feedback from staff and suitable praise ensure that pupils know how well they are doing. To observers, there is a strong sense of learning being a partnership between pupils and staff. Teachers use ICT to very good effect, and their skills have improved greatly since the last inspection. Interactive whiteboards are used consistently well, and teachers skilfully access video clips to bring subjects to life and to answer pupils' questions. Electronic voting devices enable teachers to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding in a way that pupils enjoy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is most successful in supporting academic, physical and personal development. There is an exceptionally good range of accreditation so all Year 11 pupils gain recognised awards. The strong focus on personal development through a planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education and rich extra curricular provision is highly relevant to these pupils. Planning is particularly good as it shows how all subjects can contribute to key skills and themes that go across all subjects, such as economic understanding. This means that pupils' learning is constantly reinforced with links for example, between music and history, or between French and geography. This helps to make learning meaningful to pupils. The curriculum provides well for different groups of pupils. For example, pupils with autism have good opportunities to gradually integrate with their peers and to develop independence skills that they are unlikely to develop incidentally. There is good provision for pupils' additional needs, such as speech therapy or music therapy. The curriculum is very well enriched with range of out-of-hours activities, from competitive sports activities to homework club. In addition there are residential school journeys, and opportunities to work in teams such as the steel band, the choir and the annual school musical production.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of relationships between all members of the school community contributes much to the positive and harmonious atmosphere in the school. Staff take extremely good care of all pupils. Pupils' welfare is paramount and potential risks are carefully assessed and taken into account. Meticulous attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are safe; pupils are aware of this and feel very secure. Induction arrangements for new

pupils are good, and the school has dramatically improved arrangements to support pupils moving from Year 6 to Year 7 since the previous inspection; this has helped to secure improved progress. Guidance and support are exceptionally good. This is an inclusive school where staff 'go the extra mile' to make sure that pupils have all the help that they need to keep them attending, learning and enjoying their education. Older pupils take part in their annual reviews, and have access to Connexions personnel for advice on making decisions about leaving school. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the help their children receive, often remarking that achievements have exceeded their expectations. The school is justifiably proud of its pastoral care and makes very good use of its links with other agencies to ensure that all pupils are well supported. Pupils flourish in this community where their needs are met so comprehensively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher, governors and senior leadership team provide excellent leadership. Subject leaders fulfil their roles well too. There is a clear long-term vision for the school's future development and exceptionally high expectations of what pupils and staff might achieve. There is no complacency, and a continuous drive for further improvement, in particular preparing staff for the challenge of catering for a wider range of pupils with more complex needs. The headteacher and senior leaders provide very good role models in their dealings with pupils and by being highly competent teachers. They set the tone for the school, and establish a calm environment where relationships are very good, all are valued, and achievements are recognised and celebrated. The strong commitment to training of staff empowers them and strengthens the school's capacity to effect improvement. Governors are well trained, fully involved in articulating the long-term vision for the school, and they are both supportive and rigorous in their efforts to hold the school to account. They regularly visit the school, with a particular focus in mind, and are probing when given information by the leadership team. Finances are well managed and carefully monitored. Partnership with parents is actively encouraged in a number of ways. For instance, the Family Learning programme gives parents more confidence in supporting their children's learning. Parents are very positive about the provision that the school makes for their children. The school's self-evaluation is highly effective. Staff know precisely how well pupils are doing, and what needs to be done to strengthen provision further, and the school's improvement plan reflects a full agenda. Pupils' and parents' views are taken seriously. For instance, pupils' views on school meals have recently been surveyed.

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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	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	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?	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	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

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school, and especially those who took time to talk to us about your school life. We came to your school to see how well you were getting on and to see if we could find out where you might improve. The Grange is an outstanding school. The things that stand out the most are these: - those that leave in Year 11 are very well prepared for the next step; they are mature and have excellent achievements in examinations - your behaviour in lessons is excellent - you all know exactly how well you are doing and what your targets are - teachers and their assistants are very skilled - the headteacher, governors and staff are doing an excellent job - there are lots of interesting activities in lessons and outside school hours which you all enjoy - staff take very good care of you; you feel quite safe in school and know who to turn to if you have a problem - almost all your parents think that the staff are doing a great job. We found that the staff already know what to do to make the school even better. There is a written plan showing how this will be done, and we feel sure that the school will be even more successful in future. You can help by keeping up the excellent work that you already do. We wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year.