



Sunnyside School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109739
LEA BEDFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278254
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Ms. Margaret Jones LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	The Baulk
School category	Community		SG18 OPT
Age range of pupils	3 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01767222662
Number on roll	81	Fax number	01767 222 663
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Andrew Rutt
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms. Julie Mudd

Age group 3 to 18	Inspection dates 28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	Inspection number 278254
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools over a two day period in the fourth week of the autumn term 2005.

Description of the school

Sunnyside School caters for boys and girls who have complex learning difficulties, autism and/or challenging behaviour. At the moment there is only one five year old in the school. In addition to the main site, the school provides opportunities for pupils to study in classes attached to mainstream schools across the age range. These four satellite classes give pupils a chance to be taught by their own specialist teachers and to integrate into some mainstream lessons on an individual basis. Pupils are also able to share social facilities with the host schools. The school uses a specialist approach to teach pupils with autism and those other pupils who benefit from a very structured teaching. There is a separate class, within the school, for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, who follow a specially adapted curriculum to meet their particular needs. All the pupils at Sunnyside have statements of special educational need, nine are from minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language. Pupils are drawn from a wide area and most travel to school by local authority transport. Twelve pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has not been part of a federation for the last eighteen months, but there are plans being discussed to set up a new federation with another local special school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sunnyside is a good school and, as a result of the commitment of all staff, pupils achieve as much as they can. HMI agree with the school's view that Sunnyside is an effective school where pupils make good progress and achieve well. As a result, their life chances are much improved. Some, especially those who attend the satellite classes attached to local schools, make even greater gains. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, although more could be done to enrich the curriculum with better use of resources. The school provides good value for money. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are generally given a stimulating range of work well-matched to their needs. Pupils are cared for very well and their personal development is good. Relationships are friendly and supportive. All the parents feel that the school is a good one and are supportive of what it does. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff. There is a clear sense of direction and a secure understanding of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. There have been significant improvements since its last inspection in developing the ways the school assesses and records how well pupils are doing, but these are not always used consistently. There is more work still to be done in extending the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use resources to increase opportunities for active learning and stimulate a wider range of senses used by the pupils and students; - Implement a rigorous and formal programme of classroom observation; - Ensure teachers assess and record progress consistently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

As a result of their learning needs, when pupils enter the school their performance is well below what is expected for other youngsters of their age. Due to the school's effective provision, the progress made by all groups of pupils is good. They make significant gains against the nationally recognised levels of learning ('P scales'). The one pupil in the Foundation Stage has settled in well and is making good progress. Secondary pupils and those who are at Sunnyside post-16 continue to make good progress. They acquire skills which equip them well for the next stage in their learning and for life after school. For example, students have shopped for the ingredients to make pizza and were able to communicate, either by sign or verbally their choice of topping, and with sensitive support contributed to making their pizzas. Students in the satellite class at the local secondary school gain an appropriate range of accredited qualifications. All students leave with accredited qualifications and one pupil gained a GCSE in Art last year. The school makes effective use of its knowledge of how well pupils are doing to ensure they make steady progress and to set them generally challenging targets. Examples of pupils' work from year to year, including photographs,

reflect this. Although targets in lessons are challenging those set in the individual education plans are occasionally too vague and not challenging enough. The school has plans to improve this and to improve the assessment of pupils' progress by introducing more robust systems which all teachers follow in tracking what pupils achieve. As yet the school does not analyse the achievement of different groups of pupils. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good with particular strengths in their social and moral development. They learn to take turns and to treat others with respect. Pupils learn about other cultures through international links set up with Uganda and New Zealand. Their spiritual development is fostered through collective acts of worship in class, and special assemblies to celebrate festivals such as Easter and Diwali. Pupils' behaviour is good, with an orderly atmosphere in lessons and around the school. Any challenging behaviour, which occurs due to pupils' difficulties, is managed appropriately to minimise disruption to other children. All pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is higher than is found in similar schools nationally. Most participate in lessons and join in playground activities. Pupils are proud of their achievements and are keen to show their work to visitors to the school. They are actively involved in making a contribution to the life of the school and are encouraged to attend lunchtime clubs and raise money for charities. The safety of children is given a high priority and all procedures are well organised to ensure that this is so. Healthy eating is promoted well and water is provided regularly throughout the day. However, the standard of lunches could be improved further.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. All lessons seen were at least sound and most were good. Teaching is well planned, with clear learning objectives matched to the needs of individual pupils. The teachers organise lessons carefully to enable all pupils to succeed. There is a strong focus on routine and structure. This is having particular benefits for those pupils with autism. Communication symbols are used well to support individual pupils and this good practice is extended to the written text displayed around the school and in learning materials given to pupils. In the best lessons a variety of resources are used to stimulate a response from the pupils. For example, in a lesson with older students the teacher played a guitar and sang the two and five times tables. A student was heard to say 'I like maths with music its fun'. Weaker lessons do not make good use of interactive whiteboards or objects to involve and engage pupils and their attention wanders. Weaker teaching has been identified by the senior management team and supportive action has been taken. However, subject co-ordinators are not using classroom observation to ensure that achievement in different subjects is maintained.

Team work is a strong feature of the school. The skilled teaching assistants are well trained and directed. They have a clear understanding of the levels of support required by different pupils and are fully involved in ensuring that the pupils' personal skills and self-esteem are successfully developed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is now good. Pupils follow programmes across the full range of subjects but within a structure which is suited to their needs. Literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and communication skills are especially well developed. The children with profound and multiple learning difficulties follow a programme which has been especially adapted for them. This works well and parents are appreciative of the progress they are making. The school actively seeks opportunities for pupils in its satellite classes to join mainstream classes. A small number of pupils join mainstream classes with clear social and academic benefits. For example, one pupil is attending mainstream lessons for science and mathematics. Older pupils are supported to attend a range of college courses and work experience placements relevant to their needs, interests and future life. The school provides a range of additional opportunities. These enliven and enhance the curriculum, for example, horse riding and swimming, trips to farms and museums, and visitors into school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a high level of care, guidance and support. Education, medical and care staff work closely to meet the needs of individual children. For example the school nurse has made useful contributions to sex and relationships education and gives individual advice to parents. Links with external agencies are good. Detailed personal care plans are monitored regularly to ensure that children continue to be provided with the support they need to help them to learn and make progress. Parents are complimentary about the service the school provides for their children. The arrangements for child protection are well managed. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow to identify children who are potentially 'at risk'. The staff demonstrate a high degree of sensitivity and respect for pupils and their dignity when managing personal needs and inappropriate behaviour. Although links with the Connexions service are good, the appropriate kind of careers education and guidance to meet the needs of pupils has not been well-thought through and does not start in Year 7. A teacher has been released to develop a suitable careers education and work related learning programme from Year 7 onwards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school evaluated its leadership and management as good. The evidence from the inspection shows that overall it is good. The headteacher promotes a caring and supportive ethos in which pupils feel safe, and concentrate on their learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in a number of areas, including provision for ICT and the curriculum. The senior management team is enthusiastic, and hardworking. The team is new and relatively inexperienced, but is developing its ability to use data effectively to track the progress of individual pupils. There is a good team spirit among the staff who are well motivated and want to do their best by the school and its pupils. The school has correctly identified its strengths and weaknesses, but the draft school improvement plan is not as detailed and specific as it could be, and this limits the extent to which senior staff and governors can measure how well they are meeting their targets. Accurate evaluation of teaching has taken place, but the monitoring which takes place is not systematic or extensive enough. Where teaching had been identified as less than satisfactory the school has taken action to remedy the situation. The governors are an active body who support the school and are knowledgeable about it. They ensure that the school meets legal requirements and are involved in school development planning and setting the school's budget. However, they do not yet have the confidence to challenge and question the school. Teaching resources are deployed efficiently. The budget is in surplus, but this is being used to purchase much needed ICT equipment, and improve the playground. The accommodation is well-maintained but there is still no provision for practical work in science or design and technology. The school has worked around this by buying more equipment, adapting the curriculum and ensuring pupils in the satellite classes use specialist facilities.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	3

The quality of provision

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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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	No
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 welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed meeting you and your teachers. I thought you would like to know what I liked about your school and how I thought it could get even better. What we liked about your school: - You go to a good school which is a happy place to be; - You are helped to learn by all the adults in your class; - They know how you like to learn and help you to improve; - You have some very good teachers; - They take very good care of you especially if you are upset or ill; - Young people in the FE class are making really good progress and enjoyed making pizza; - Pupils in the satellite really enjoy mixing with pupils from other schools. What we have asked your school to do now: - I have asked teachers to give you even more exciting things to feel, hear and see in your lessons. - I have asked your teachers to keep a careful check on how you are getting on and to make sure you are learning all the things on your schedules. I hope you continue to enjoy your learning and make even better progress in the future.