



# Samuel Pepys School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110951  
**LEA** CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278557  
**Inspection dates** 25 January 2006 to 26 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Alan Lemon LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Cromwell Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		PE19 2EZ
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01480375012
<b>Number on roll</b>	90	<b>Fax number</b>	01480375014
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Jenny Knight
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Julia Weston

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 25 January 2006 - 26 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278557
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school caters for pupils with statements of special educational needs. There are 90 pupils on roll of which 17 students are in the sixth form. Pupils' special needs are widely varied and for most, their attainment on entry is very low. Most have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and about a third are autistic. Many pupils have, additionally, physical disabilities, speech or communication problems or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils' homes are spread over a wide geographical area and their backgrounds are diverse, ranging between being considerably deprived to quite prosperous. Nearly all pupils are White British and none speak English as a second language. The school supports a substantial number of other schools in meeting the needs of their pupils with learning difficulties. Students in the sixth form are taught for part of the time in the St Neots Community College.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The effectiveness of the school is good. The inspection findings differ from the school's own evaluation that its effectiveness is outstanding. Key aspects of what the school provides are excellent and the quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Much of the school's work is of high quality, but the effect on achievement is limited. This is because the evaluation of pupils' performance, which is at an early stage of development, does not provide a sufficiently detailed picture of their progress. This is needed to show the extent to which the school is effective in raising achievement. Nevertheless, achievement is good even though standards are below average. Pupils' learn effectively and make good progress because their needs, despite being wide in range and complexity, are well understood. Children in the Reception year and students in the sixth form are taught effectively and achieve well. The very broad range of work and activities in the curriculum meets the multitude of learners' needs, impressively. Staff have considerable expertise and provide pupils with excellent care and support. As a result, pupils' personal development is exemplary. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is having a very positive impact. She is setting an ambitious direction and is raising expectations. Governors and parents are closely involved in the life of the school, which is highly regarded in the community and by parents. Partnerships and the support provided to other schools are excellent. Much progress has already been made to bring about improvements since the last inspection, and further relevant changes are planned. The capacity for improvement is good and the school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The effectiveness of the sixth form is good. The school provides for students exceptionally well. Students make good progress and all complete the courses they begin. Courses are well chosen to match students' needs and interests. They achieve well in accredited vocational courses, particularly the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network's Towards Independence course. Students' work often takes place in the community and is closely linked to real life experiences. Enterprise activities make a good contribution to their understanding of earning a living. Students are exceptionally well cared for, enjoy their education and have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Undertaking a substantial proportion of their education in the sixth form at the St Neots Community College does a great deal for their confidence, social development and their sense of emerging adulthood. Parents of students are very pleased with their children's preparation for the future. Students contribute very well to the life of the school and the community. Leadership and management are good and the sixth form gives good value for money.

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

- Continue to develop the procedures for the analysis and evaluation of pupils' performance to ensure that work is well matched to their individual needs.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement throughout the school is good, although there is no compelling evidence to say, as the school does, that pupils' achievement is outstanding. The school has not tested with sufficient rigour how well its pupils are achieving. The evidence points to good achievement and this does not vary between boys and girls or according to the nature of pupils' special educational needs. The children in the reception year achieve well. The general good rate of progress is the result of effective teaching. The excellent support for pupils' personal development and the extensive expertise on hand to meet the wide range of pupils' needs contributes much. However, these strengths, although exemplary, lose some of their force in raising achievement as their impact is not clearly enough understood. In the analysis of progress that the school undertakes, a number of pupils are shown to achieve or exceed the school's targets ahead of time. What is not clear is whether this is the result of these pupils making good or better progress or because the targets are unchallenging. Notwithstanding this, there are many occasions when individual pupils make outstanding and unexpected progress. Over several years, pupils in Year 11 have followed Entry Level Certificate courses in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Those entered gain certificates and a good number of these have been awarded at the highest level. When compared with what the same pupils achieved two years earlier, in Year 9, these results represent good progress. Very occasionally, through the links with the St Neots Community College, the highest attaining pupils gain passes in GCSE examinations.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The very close attention given to pupils' becoming self-reliant means they develop into well-rounded individuals, equipped as far as possible to manage their lives independently, a point highlighted and praised by many parents. By the time they are ready to leave school, they are, in a great many respects, very well prepared for the future. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted outstandingly well, with a wide variety of opportunities and experiences in school and beyond. An assembly involved pupils in celebrating the Chinese New Year with displays of streamers and dragon dancing. This theme and the Legend of the Animals were followed up enthusiastically in literacy. There are many instances of pupils developing an economic awareness by raising money for good causes and helping senior citizens with gardening. Part of the money raised by sixth form students from their lunch-making enterprise they give to a charity of their choice. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school. They attend well and their behaviour is outstanding. The very good relationships pervading the school mean that pupils discover excitement and enjoyment in learning. Challenging behaviour is dealt with firmly and skilfully by staff. As far as can be expected, pupils act safely and are very effectively protected. The school is firmly set on gaining the 'Health Promoting School' status. Pupils enjoy a very wide range of formal and informal

physical activities in the playground and the early morning sensory circuits. A strong emphasis on healthy living helps pupils be aware of, and keep to, well-balanced diets.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and their assistants know the pupils very well, largely as a result of the close relationships they form with them and their parents. In addition, the substantial training staff undertake increases their understanding of the wide range of pupils' learning difficulties. This pays dividends in the classroom with the high level of expertise applied in teaching that effectively meets pupils' needs. In this respect, the special methods which are applied effectively to teaching pupils with autism and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties mean that these pupils are kept well involved in purposeful learning. Teachers and their assistants assess pupils' progress effectively and, in general, use this to provide pupils with appropriately challenging work. A new system for assessing, which is adapted for special schools, is increasing the accuracy of the assessment of individual pupils. This helps enormously, at classroom level, in planning the next steps in learning and in setting pupils good individual targets. In general, teacher's plans for lessons set out a range of well varied activities. These are a good match to the wide difference in pupils' capabilities. Just occasionally, however, teachers' planning does not encompass the breadth of capabilities and is not clear enough about what exactly pupils' should learn.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The range of work and activities making up the curriculum are outstanding as a contribution to meeting the wide range of pupils' needs. The curriculum is very broad as it draws in considerable expertise and a wide variety of approaches needed for the population of pupils. It offers a great many additional opportunities that interest pupils. The accommodation and resources that support work and activities are very good. Planning is detailed and work is usually skilfully adapted to reflect the range of pupils' capabilities. The curriculum is very well aimed at equipping pupils with the important knowledge and skills they will need in later life. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are provided for effectively. Pupils' access to a range of accredited courses contributes very well to their experiences. Personal, social and health education is sharply focused on providing pupils with the knowledge and skills to be healthy and stay safe.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The care of all pupils is exemplary. They are protected extremely well in all respects. Pupils are secure in school. Safety and well-being are improved by the school's excellent accommodation and facilities. Pupils are exceptionally well supported, and skilled attention is paid to dealing with the complex needs many possess. The school has a wide range of specialist resources to meet pupils' needs, going to the extent of purchasing speech and language therapy and several complementary therapies, such as in music, all adding to pupils' personal development. Pupils develop much self-reliance. Among the older pupils this is seen in the opportunities to plan and prepare meals, travel independently and manage everyday transactions like shopping. Progress towards independence is closely assessed and pupils have challenging targets to support this, and this is particularly so in regard to pupils' improving their behaviour. Pupils with autism make big strides towards integrating, socialising and communicating. Pupils' self-confidence grows rapidly and, through the close attention given by staff, they receive great encouragement. Good assessment in the classroom ensures teachers are aware of each pupil's next steps of learning. As the school does not make a sufficient analysis of assessments as a whole, teachers lack the benefits of an overall picture of pupils' progress. Nevertheless, they use their assessments effectively in deciding pupils' individual targets. These targets are often written with a clear learning objective to aim at, though occasionally some targets are not stated as specifically as this.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher, in post for two years, is having a positive impact on the direction of the school and its improvement. Building on the foundation of a good school, the headteacher has been inspirational in moving it further forward. The curriculum and support for pupils have improved through the rapid increase of resources, the broadening range of activities and increases in the staff's expertise. As a result, the wide range of pupils' needs is no longer an insurmountable barrier to them learning effectively. There is a momentum in the school for more improvement. However, these changes have not yet led to better achievement. Improvement still has some way to go before the school can substantiate its view that it has outstanding effectiveness. The capacity for improvement and the value for money are both good. Governors lend their considerable expertise and experience to shaping the school's direction and achieving improvement. The staff, parents and the community are now closely involved in deciding the school's priorities. There are substantial links with other school's, especially with the St Neots Community College. The help given to other schools towards meeting the needs of their pupils with learning difficulties is exemplary and this service is held in the highest regard. The leadership of subjects, whilst good in checking the quality of provision, is not fully effective in giving a lead to raising pupils' achievement. This is because the school's analysis of pupils' performance is only

satisfactory and not yet at the stage where it is providing a sufficiently detailed picture of achievement.



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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>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<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>	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	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<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**

Many thanks for such a warm welcome during my visit to your school. It was a joy to see you all happily working and getting along so well with each other and your teachers. I really enjoyed the tasty lunch made by the sixth form students and I was amazed by the celebration in the hall of the Chinese New Year; pupils created a real sense of festival. In the two days I spent with you I found out that you have a good school. It is new and has lots of really good equipment, especially the computers and whiteboards. The playground is great. The headteacher and staff are all working very hard to make the whole school as good as it can be. I have asked them to give much closer attention to making sure you are all making as much progress as you possibly can. I saw a lot that was really outstanding, such as how much you enjoy lessons. The lessons I saw were good and all the staff helped you learn. You look after yourselves very well and you are very kind to each other. I think all the staff do a tremendous job in taking care of you. I wish you all well for the future.