



David Lewis School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111499
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278707
Inspection dates 30 January 2006 to 31 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Henry Moreton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Mill Lane
School category	Non-maintained special		Warford
Age range of pupils	7 to 19		Alderley Edge, Cheshire SK9 7UD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01565 640 066
Number on roll	58	Fax number	01565 640 166
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Isobel Hind
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr C Dean

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They were joined by a CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) inspector, who took a significant role in inspection activities, particularly in looking at the care and safeguarding of pupils. This is the sole report. The CSCI are not writing a separate one following this inspection.

Description of the school

David Lewis School is part of the larger David Lewis Centre where education and health services are brought together to provide for children, young people and adults with difficult-to-treat epilepsy and associated neurodisabilities.

One of the distinctive features of the school is its medical, clinical and therapeutic capacity. Another is that the vast majority of boys (31) and girls (27) are resident, most of them all year round.

Pupils' standards on entry are well below that expected for their age. Virtually every pupil has a statement of special educational need, and is white British. Pupils come from throughout the UK, and 37 are in the care of the local authorities that have placed them at the school.

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 with some very significant strengths and it offers good value for money. Managers ensure this is a school where every child matters. Self evaluation by managers is accurate. One parent informed inspectors that he was 'delighted with all aspects of education and care'. Inspectors agree. This whole child approach underpins provision from the time pupils enter the school until they leave.

Managers work hard to ensure that all aspects of provision are brought together for the benefit of pupils, and they do this by ensuring that care officers work alongside teachers and classroom assistants in the classroom. As a result pupils of all abilities make good improvement in the development of their key skills and in their personal development. The quality of teaching is good and the progress made by pupils is well monitored. The school is continuing to develop all staff's ability to accurately assess pupils' progress, both in school and in the residential houses. There is potential for better use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a learning tool in lessons. Residential experiences and a wide range of school activities enhance the education of the pupils. Good attention is given to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Parents and carers are pleased with what the school offers and see positive changes in their children. They are asked for their views about the effectiveness of the school, and action is taken. The school has plans to give pupils more of a say in what happens to them. The issues identified by the last inspection have all been addressed. All of this is possible because of good leadership, management and governance.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school's view of the overall effectiveness and efficiency of provision in the sixth form is that it is good. Inspection evidence supports this view. Students achieve well and continue to develop their ability to communicate. They grow in maturity and become more independent as a result of the individual support they receive. All students follow a course focussed on essential life skills, each benefiting from a personalised learning programme. This leads to appropriate accreditation. Students are given opportunities to experience the world of work either on site or in the community. They can also attend a local college as well as benefiting from the close links with the David Lewis College which shares the site. The new purpose built accommodation gives post-16 provision a positive ethos and there are no significant obstacles to further improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

Residential provision is effective and efficient and makes a good contribution to the work of the school. Last year's reports on the children's homes by the CSCI recognised that almost all of the National Minimum Standards are met. Since then the school has

given good attention to implementing each of the recommendations for improvement. Well established routines and good relationships with care officers ensure that pupils are well cared for. The residential curriculum is well planned and, as a result of their developing role in classrooms, care officers are better able to support pupils, particularly in developing their communication skills. Pupils take full part in a wide range of activities that are aimed primarily at developing their personal and social skills, and their enjoyment of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to refine the use of assessment data by all staff in order to evidence pupils' progress in all aspects of their development.
- Improve pupil's use of ICT in classrooms in order to develop their skills.
- Give pupils more of a voice in what happens to them, including hastening the introduction of a school council.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school caters for some of the neediest pupils in the country in terms of their difficulties and disabilities. The ability of pupils varies from year to year, but their starting points are well below national expectations. All pupils find much of the work difficult, and their attention span is limited as a result of their severe neurological impairment and other medical conditions. Nonetheless, the school has high expectations and works hard to provide a learning experience that matches each pupil's needs. Pupils make good progress in developing their communication skills from their very low base on entry. The assessments made at the start of each year are detailed and meticulously recorded and reported. Most pupils make good progress in lessons and during the many off site activities. Their progress is well charted across all areas of the curriculum, and in the residential settings. While some pupils do regress in academic terms, all make progress, and most make good progress, in their personal, emotional and social development. Pupils' achievement in relation to rigorous individual learning targets shows good response to the challenges set for them. Creditably, by the age of 16, and again by 18/19, many pupils achieve passes in internal as well as externally accredited courses. These equip them with some of the skills to help them live independent lives.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' development and well-being are good. Staff ensure they thrive in a safe and healthy environment in and out of school. Attendance is good, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school and the support of parents and carers. Challenging learning targets are set and these are closely monitored so that pupils achieve clearly identified learning outcomes. All can access a range of recreational and therapeutic activities, including play and sensory room facilities, and there are a number of safe and accessible

places where they can socialise. Pupils are well supported with high staff to pupil ratios. All pupils have 1:1 support as a minimum. This level of care helps them take part in educational and leisure activities, both on and off site, including challenging outdoor education activities. These, together with regular physical education and swimming lessons, ensure pupils enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Targeted action is taken to promote good behaviour. Some pupils display challenging behaviour as a consequence of their medical disabilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Effective learning takes place because of the enthusiasm which the teachers and their helpers have, their detailed knowledge of pupils, and the care they take over each one of them. The communication needs of the pupils are precisely identified and effective use is made of signs, pictures and symbols to support pupils' understanding. Inspectors agree with the parent who commented 'I am delighted by the imaginative way my child is taught and I positively welcome the interaction of learning objectives into leisure activities'. Staff work well as a team and planning between the teachers and the care officers ensures that learning opportunities are taken in the residential setting, especially in developing pupils' communication skills. Staff challenge and extend pupils without causing them stress and adverse reaction. Teaching assistants contribute fully in assessing and supporting learning and usually pre-empt difficult situations well. Occasionally they are not well informed enough to be as effective as they might be. This reflects the challenges of teachers managing large numbers of adults, some of whom are not familiar with all classroom routines. Though use of computers is limited, other resources are used creatively to engage and motivate pupils.

Assessment is detailed and accurate. It is used increasingly well in the boarding houses. The school is developing its assessment procedures so that all staff are able to measure progress even more precisely for all in and out of school activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good; it meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Many pupils have their work accredited nationally. The importance of living safe and healthy lives is emphasised in all aspects of the school's work. Individual needs are well matched to provision, and underpinned by a focus on improving communication skills. Consequently, use of sign and symbols is evident across all subjects and activities. Each pupil has an effective learning plan which is now extended into the pupil's home or residential setting. A strong focus on physical activity includes use of the multi-sensory gym and swimming pool, as well as a local riding school and outdoor activity centres. Provision for the personal and social

development of pupils is firmly embedded across the school and prepares pupils well to contribute to society. Opportunities for pupils to practice work skills are provided on site and in the community; for example, pupils help maintain the school gardens. Some post-16 pupils attend courses at the local college, and educational visits, including residential, support the learning for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all pupils. Staff are sensitive to their needs and there is good support for them when they are upset or troubled. Pupils whose difficulties are reflected in extremely challenging behaviour receive well targeted support. Good support is given to parents/carers. The school's use of visiting professionals is extensive and with their input, provision is well co-ordinated for individual pupils. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and well known by staff. There are separate risk assessments and management guidance for each pupil. Staff are well trained to identify risks of harm to pupils. There is a well co-ordinated approach to promoting the health of pupils including appropriate sex and relationship education. School staff receive training in safeguarding children, and are aware that they must not promise confidentiality to children disclosing incidents relating to child protection. A school policy to ensure that all pupils, including those who cannot speak, are aware of how to report any concerns over their protection is in place and is properly overseen by the on site social work team.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation by managers accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses and there is a good awareness of what needs to be done to improve. There are good systems on place to check the quality of teaching. Quality assurance procedures are appropriate and include the monitoring of work in classrooms. Communications are good, with daily briefings for all staff. The contribution of the considerable number of non-teaching staff is highly valued; rightly so, because their work is significant. Effective links have been established with mainstream schools and with the local community. There are robust procedures in place to check the work of the school, such as measuring pupils' progress. The school is particularly effective in seeking and acting upon the views of parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

The headteacher provides vision as well as strong leadership and he is well supported by an experienced and committed staff and governing body. The senior leadership group offer considerable expertise and effectively challenge each other. This is a complex school set within a larger establishment. It is a credit to its managers that, in spite of this, all staff are focused on meeting the broad needs of every child. As a result there is no sense of complacency and together managers have developed a

school ethos that is positive and inclusive. The school has improved well since its last inspection. Consequently, it is in a good position to make further improvement.

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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	NA	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	

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	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	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	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
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	insufficient evidence

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 welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed finding out about the many interesting things you are doing.

What we most liked about the school:

- the good progress you make in developing your communication skills
- the way that every one of you is well known to staff
- the way that you are busy in your lessons
- the different places you go to
- the way that the school asks your parents and carers about how well it is doing for you.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- continue to develop the ways that everyone in the school knows just how well you are doing
- improve the computers so that you can use them more in lessons
- give you more of a say in what happens to you.

We hope that you carry on trying your best and continue to enjoy the many opportunities that the school makes available to you.