

Doubletrees School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112085
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	278843
Inspection dates	14–15 February 2006
Reporting inspector	Pauline Robins HMI

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms K Grew
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Blazey Gate St Blazey Par Cornwall PL24 2DS
Telephone number	01726 812757
Fax number	01726 812896

Age group	2–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one HMI and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Doubletrees is a community school for pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties. Some pupils have additional needs such as severe medical conditions, physical disabilities and sensory difficulties. More than 30% of pupils have Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). A significant number of pupils with ASD present associated severely challenging behaviour. The school covers a wide catchment area and pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. All of the pupils are from White British heritage backgrounds and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Most pupils join the school between the ages of 2 and 5, although a number join in Year 7 having been included in mainstream primary schools prior to this. Residential provision for geographical reasons and respite support is provided for 43 pupils from Monday to Thursday and part of the school holidays. An extensive programme of building and refurbishment is now nearing completion. However, this has been immensely disruptive to the smooth running of the school over the past two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Through the existing process of standardisation, increase the accuracy with which teachers match pupils' targets to P levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching at all key stages is consistently good, with some aspects of outstanding practice. Nearly all teaching is well planned, with stimulating resources used to make the lessons more accessible and enjoyable.

Communication and signing are used well to support individual pupils and this good practice is extended to the written text displayed around the school. As a result of the school's improving assessment procedures, staff are increasingly skilled at setting appropriate targets and building on the pupils' previous achievements. However, this understanding is not fully embedded and not all activities are sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils.

Teaching assistants are highly skilled and they are all well deployed. They have a clear understanding of the levels of support required by different pupils and are actively involved in the process of assessment and recording achievement.

There is good support from the Local Authority services for those pupils who have hearing or visual difficulties.

High priority is given to the professional development of staff. There is a rolling programme of funding which successfully enables unqualified staff to train as teachers, while continuing to work in the school. Staff are also developing their levels of expertise as they participate in effective outreach work which the school delivers to other service providers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is good overall and outstanding for the oldest students. Pupils follow programmes across the full range of subjects but within a structure which is meaningful to their needs. Communication and PSHE are particularly well developed. Specific strategies are in place to help pupils at times of crisis so that they can continue to access the curriculum, such as personalised learning programmes, therapeutic approaches and access to the ASD provision. The curriculum is supported by an excellent range of out-of-school experiences. These are planned to take advantage of 'one-off' opportunities such as a visit to a rugby tournament or the

longer-term projects which exist with partner schools. These have a beneficial impact on the pupils' personal development, in addition to broadening their knowledge and understanding.

The provision for pupils with ASD is good. There is a flexible approach which strikes a good balance between individual and group work and meets the needs of all pupils. A wide range of strategies is available to the staff, who are skilful in understanding and applying that which best suits the needs of a pupil at any given time. Where ASD pupils are able to access the main school classrooms, excellent adaptations have been made to create individual work areas, while still allowing the pupils to be included with their peers. However, accommodation in the ASD base is poor and the limited space, shabby décor and noisy floor are not conducive to teaching pupils with such extreme levels of need. This is acknowledged by the school, which is working with the Local Authority to address the issue.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The school provides a very high level of care, guidance and support. Education, medical and care staff work closely together to meet the needs of all pupils. Links with external agencies are good and closely monitored to ensure that support remains appropriate and agencies are present when programmes are being developed. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the education their children receive. Comments like "It was the best decision I ever made to send my child here" and "The staff are totally committed and they always go the extra mile for the children" were not uncommon. The arrangements for child protection are well managed. Staff understand and follow the procedures to identify pupils who are potentially 'at risk'. There are good links to the Connexions service and older pupils receive good information on progression opportunities. Link courses at local colleges enable pupils to sample vocational opportunities.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Doubletrees School St Blazey Gate St Blazey Par Cornwall PL24 2DS

17 February 2006

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave to Charles and me when we visited your school. We think that Doubletrees is a really good school where you have fun and enjoy your lessons. All the adults in the school work really hard to make sure you feel loved and cared for.

You are all very thoughtful and kind towards each other. You behave well and work hard.

Some of you find being in school really difficult, particularly being with lots of people. The school does a really good job making sure you are not left out of things but letting you have your own space to work.

A special thank you to the boys who came to talk to me; that was really brave. They told me about all the things you do and the things you think need changing! I heard all about how much you like the new building and redecoration, even though there was lots of fuss while it was being done. Your parents also told us what a good school it is and how kind the teachers are.

To make your school even better we have asked the teachers to make sure that you have the right targets. Good luck in the future.

Pauline (Robins HMI)