



The Delves School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113033
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279078
Inspection dates 5 December 2005 to 6 December 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	Hayes Lane
School category	Community special		DE55 1AR
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01773602198
Number on roll	72	Fax number	01773 605904
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Trevor Whatton
Date of previous inspection	3 April 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Hilary Surga and Mr K McKenzie

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Delves is a mixed, day area special school for pupils with wide a range of learning disabilities. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Almost half of the pupils have moderate learning difficulties (MLD), roughly a third have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), and small numbers have severe learning difficulties (SLD), speech or communication difficulties, hearing impairment or physical difficulties. All the pupils are White British, and over two thirds of them are of secondary age. Boys outnumber girls by more than two to one. Pupils' attainment on entry is low. Over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, and this is very high. There is currently one pupil who is in public care, and no travellers, asylum seekers or refugees. The Delves has links with mainstream and special schools and a local college. It is also a Health Promoting School. It has the Sportsmark award and is currently working towards achieving Sports College Status, the Eco-Schools Initiative and the Basic Skills Award. Following the last inspection, there was a period of two and a half years when the headteacher had frequent periods of absence due to illness. Since his retirement, governors have tried unsuccessfully to recruit a headteacher. For the last two years, the previous deputy headteacher has acted as headteacher. More recently a new deputy headteacher, appointed from within the school, has shared the role by acting as headteacher for two days each week.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Delves provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and so is their personal development. Pupils and their parents are well satisfied with the provision that the school makes. Staff commitment and teamwork is strong, and there are good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are managed well, and the school is successful in improving the behaviour of pupils. Teaching is satisfactory, although there is no policy on this important aspect of the school's work. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide variety of outdoor education and physical activities and all have the opportunity to go on residential school journeys. The staff have addressed most of the key issues identified at the last inspection. However, the accommodation remains inadequate, and the school is reliant on local authority funding to improve this. Although plans have been drawn up to add specialist teaching rooms, and these are being considered by the local authority, they do not address all the weaknesses. A lack of continuity in leadership since the last inspection has resulted in a slow pace of curriculum development, and a few curriculum requirements are not met. Not all pupils get the same number of mathematics lessons. Overall, there has not been enough improvement since the last inspection. Self-evaluation is at an early stage of development, and practice is not reflected in the school's policy. However, the inspection agrees with the school's evaluation in most respects. With support from the local authority, the two acting headteachers and the governors have secured much improvement in the last 18 months. There is a clear and ambitious vision for the school's future, and the school has suitable plans to strengthen most aspects of provision. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the school now has a sound capacity to improve. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Review timetabling arrangements to ensure that all pupils have the same number of mathematics lessons.
- Agree a clear policy that reflects the school's practice on school self-evaluation, and make greater use of measurement and analysis in this process.
- Agree on what makes a good lesson and use these criteria when monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
- Together with help from the local authority improve the accommodation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although pupils do not reach the standards expected for their ages, this is entirely the result of the nature and extent of their learning difficulties. Pupils make satisfactory progress. The school sets fairly challenging targets for raising achievement and is successful in meeting these and occasionally exceeding them. For several years, the school has submitted data on pupils' achievements to Durham University. This shows that almost all pupils make expected progress in English, mathematics and science, and that when compared with similar groups nationally, their achievements are average.

The Durham information does not show any significant difference between the different special needs groups in the school. Pupils achieve most of the targets set in their individual education plans; the school collects this information but does not analyse it to see whether certain classes or groups are more successful than others. Recently, staff have received training in the use of a software package linked to the school's record keeping system, and this will allow analysis of assessment information to be carried out efficiently. All pupils in Year 11 leave with some external accreditation. Last summer, higher attaining pupils successfully passed OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society for Arts) Entry Level examinations in English, mathematics, science, physical education, geography and information technology. Three pupils obtained G grades in GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) mathematics. Five pupils left with a Youth Award Scheme Bronze award, and three achieved the Transition Challenge, both accredited by ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' behaviour is good. Those who have difficulty in behaving well all the time are well supported in improving their self-control. Pupils are friendly, polite and well-mannered towards visitors; when they visit other schools, staff comment favourably on their behaviour. In lessons, pupils behave consistently well. They persevere with tasks, ask for help when they need it, and present their work neatly. Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils attend well, and a few achieve perfect attendance. Almost all pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and the other activities provided. However, a small number of persistent non-attenders, including those admitted because of non-attendance elsewhere, bring down the school's statistics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils respect the school rules. All contribute to their own environment by taking part in a litter rota, and older pupils act as sports leaders by taking lunchtime clubs for younger pupils. Pupils raise funds for charity. A strong programme of personal, social and health education helps pupils to develop their self-awareness, and awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles. The regular celebration of their achievements effectively builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem, and the School Council enables pupils to influence school life. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of different cultures. Through enterprise activities, and team sports, pupils learn to work together, and older pupils are prepared for adult life through work experience and lessons in topics such as money management. The school is aware that there are few opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community and this is formally recognised in the school's development plan.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Staff have good relationships with pupils, and many provide good role models for them to follow. Since the last inspection, staff have improved their skills in managing pupils with challenging behaviour. As a result, management of pupils in lessons is good, and pupils are productively engaged throughout. Staff work well together, so pupils are effectively supported in lessons. Adults give just the right amount of help, and pupils persevere with tasks. Many concentrate well, and a few show a good capacity to work independently. Teachers know what levels pupils are working at, and they plan tasks that are suitably challenging. They also select methods that appeal to pupils, such as learning by playing games in maths or making bird boxes in a production line. Monitoring of teaching is carried out well, and the school's evaluation of this is accurate. However, there is no teaching and learning policy, and staff do not have a shared view of what constitutes good teaching at The Delves. At present, assessment for learning is a priority for development. Most teachers share learning objectives with pupils and review learning; they also give constructive feedback and mark pupils' work well, so pupils are aware of how well they are doing. Many pupils know what their personal targets are, and in the best examples, their progress towards these is clearly shown on the classroom wall, or in their books. Although the school is now well resourced with computers, their use in lessons is limited. Improved use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is a priority in the school's development plan.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is particularly successful in promoting pupils' physical development. The physical education (PE) programme, extra curricular activities and residential school journeys offer pupils a very good range of challenging physical activities, which most greatly enjoy. Since the last inspection, the school has not kept pace with all curriculum developments. Although the broad requirements of the National Curriculum are met, some elements of citizenship and work-related learning are not yet in place. For instance, careers education does not start until Year 9. Staff are working with local authority consultants to implement improvements. In the past year, a great deal of thought has been given to the curriculum, which has developed in a number of ways. The addition of several vocational courses, such as construction, child care, and health and beauty, has made it more relevant to pupils, and links with other schools have widened the opportunities for them. The range of accreditation on offer has increased. In September, the school introduced the teaching of ability groups for secondary aged pupils in English, mathematics and PE. This is working well, but an unintended effect of the new timetable has been to reduce the number of mathematics lessons for a few pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a calm and purposeful environment where pupils feel valued and listened to. The good relationships that staff have with pupils underpin well this aspect of the school's work. All pupils feel safe in the school and they are confident that they have a trusted adult to confide in. Although a few say that there is bullying at the school, they find that this is dealt with properly by staff. Staff are vigilant and supervision is good. Pupils who find it difficult to behave consistently well are effectively supported. Staff have been trained in supporting pupils and a room in the school, previously used for withdrawal of pupils who were disrupting classes, has been transformed into a calm and stimulating environment where pupils receive planned intervention to enable them to overcome their difficulties. With parental approval, a same-day detention is being used effectively as a sanction, and pupils respond well to the 'report' system, which requires them to meet personal behaviour targets each lesson. The school's arrangements for child protection and children in public care are secure. A breakfast club provides a healthy and sociable start to the day for those pupils that choose to come. Nutritious lunches are cooked on the school's premises; there is a choice, including healthy options. The inadequate accommodation detracts from otherwise good provision. There are too few specialist teaching rooms. A medical room, established since the last inspection, has no sink in it. The school does not have enough classrooms, and so the design and technology room is used to register pupils. There are no rooms in the school where visiting professionals can meet with pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The two acting headteachers work in an effective partnership. Their shared vision is widely supported by staff and governors. They are both experienced and have complementary areas of expertise. There has been much positive development since the first acting headteacher was given a mandate to lead the school. Staff morale is good, and staff who have departmental or subject leadership roles carry these out effectively. Governors have a range of skills pertinent to governance of a school like this. Governors are most supportive and have a suitable range of ways of holding the school to account. They visit classrooms, and subject leaders make presentations to them on their curriculum areas. They have suitable plans to appoint a permanent headteacher. A budget deficit that had built up three years ago has been successfully reduced and a small contingency is forecast at the end of the current financial year. An improvement in the school's basic budget has helped to improve things, and the school has been able to invest well in computers. Support for staff professional development has been limited by the budget difficulties. Nonetheless, with support from the local authority, staff have been able recently to draw on others' expertise to move developments forward. One of the acting headteachers is following a course leading to the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH). The school's policy on monitoring and evaluation does not reflect current practice. For instance, it does not mention that the school surveys parents, pupils and staff each

year. It deals with monitoring but does not draw the distinction between this process and evaluation.

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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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	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 making me welcome in your school, and talking to me about your work and school life. I came to the school to see how well you are all getting on and to find out whether there are any things that could be done better. The main things that are good are: - most of you behave well which helps you to learn - you get on well with the staff - the staff work well together and are trying hard to make the school even better - most of you really enjoy all the physical activities - there are lots of ways that the school helps pupils who find it hard to behave well all the time - the breakfast club and school dinners help you to eat healthily - you feel safe in the school - you all get a chance to go on residential visits. Things that could be done better are: - making sure that you all get the same number of maths lessons - improving ways of finding out what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. I hope that you will all have a happy and successful year in 2006.