



Bennerley Fields School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113037
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279079
Inspection dates 14 February 2006 to 15 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. George Derby LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Stratford Street
School category	Community special		DE7 8QZ
Age range of pupils	3 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01159326374
Number on roll	68	Fax number	01159326374
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr.Glennice Birkin
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Margaret Stirling

Age group 3 to 16	Inspection dates 14 February 2006 - 15 February 2006	Inspection number 279079
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bennerley Fields School admits pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties. A proportion of pupils are autistic or have behavioural difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is well below that expected for their age, because of their learning difficulties. Almost all pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Currently, there are 11 children, aged two to five, in the two diagnostic and assessment nursery (DAN) classes. These children's needs are more wide ranging than the rest of the school. Many go on to mainstream or other special schools at age five. Almost all the pupils are White British and boys outnumber girls by two to one. The pupils come from a wide range of social circumstances. Over a third are eligible for free school meals, which is very high. Bennerley Fields is a Health Promoting School and has a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, the Careermark Award, the Eco-Schools Award and the Basic Skills Award. Derbyshire Local Authority is undertaking a review of its special needs provision and the school is not fully clear as to what its role will be in the future. The school has struggled with its limited funding for many years, although this year its budget has improved.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bennerley Fields is a good school where the pupils find learning very enjoyable. What the school offers in the DAN classes (Foundation Stage) is excellent. Through the determination of the headteacher and the commitment of staff, the school has improved well since the last inspection. It is clearly capable of continuing to do so. Leadership and management are good. The senior management team is a clear driving force regarding quality and performance, but the deputy headteacher has too much to do. Leadership and management of the DAN classes are excellent. The school's way of evaluating its own performance is very well developed and it knows itself well. Inspection judgements are largely in line with the school's views expressed before the inspection. Pupils achieve well academically and do well in their personal development. Children's progress in the DAN classes is outstanding. Relationships in the school are very strong and behaviour is excellent. Parents are highly delighted with the progress their children make. They, and the pupils value considerably what the school offers. Teaching is good. It is outstanding in the DAN classes because of the expert knowledge, staff have of children and the significant emphasis on their communication skills. In the rest of the school it is good, although little use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons. The school recognises that ICT development, both in the subject and across the curriculum has lagged behind. This is a priority in the school improvement plan. In general, opportunities for learning are satisfactory and they are excellent in the DAN classes. Wide ranging activities occur both inside the school and within the local community. The school has worked hard to provide a tailored curriculum in Key Stage 4 which meets the wide range of needs. It could, however, use the permitted increased flexibility in the curriculum to make better use of the time available. The programme of work for design and technology and ICT is narrow in the secondary department. This is mainly due to a lack of resources. There are many activities that support pupils' understanding of citizenship but these are not formally tied into an overall subject plan. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in ICT, its use across the curriculum and ICT resources. - Ensure that responsibilities among the senior management team are reasonably balanced and develop the role of the assistant headteacher. - Improve the curriculum for citizenship by ensuring the planning identifies all aspects of the subject, broaden opportunities, increase resources in design and technology, and use the increased flexibility in Key Stage 4 to make better use of time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils achieve well because of good teaching. There is no significant difference in the progress made by different groups or gender. However, in the DAN classes,

children make excellent progress, particularly in their communication and early literary skills. This is because of the expert nature of the staff and the support they give the children. Some go on to mainstream schools for their next placement at age five, reaching standards similar to other children of their age. The standards reached by the rest of the pupils are much lower, because of their significant learning difficulties. However in art and design, Year 11 pupils achieve standards closer to those expected for their age. The oldest pupils achieve well in a good range of awards by the time they leave the school. This is because the school strongly motivates them to believe in themselves. It is also related to the trust they have in the adults. Pupils know the staff want them to do their best so they try very hard. The school analyses pupils' progress and achievements carefully, although there is still room to examine this further. The considerable amount of data shows that pupils make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding across subjects. Pupils largely meet their personal targets. However, in trying to challenge itself even further, the school has found that some targets set have been too challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and what the staff provide for them. Attendance is satisfactory. A proportion of pupils with medical conditions are frequently absent. The pupils are friendly, very polite, well-mannered and growing into mature young adults ready for the next stage of work or education. Pupils often behave exceptionally well. The very few who find managing their behaviour difficult are usually adequately supported, although occasionally staff do not take decisive action early enough. Pupils' perseverance with tasks they find hard is exceptional in Years 7 to 11 and contributes to their success. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect each other and the school rules. They contribute very well to the running of the school. The school council is an active body which has influenced significant change in the school environment. Pupils raise funds for charity. A strong programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps pupils to develop their self-awareness, and awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles. Regular praise and celebration of achievements builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of their own and other cultures. Through enterprise activities and team sports, pupils learn to work together. Work experience and work-related activities prepare pupils well for adult life and make a strong contribution to their personal development. The school is prioritising the development of pupils' greater independence in its improvement plan.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

This is good across the main school and excellent in the DAN. Most lessons seen during the inspection were good and a few were outstanding. The exceptional knowledge

and commitment of nursery staff and their high level of skill in identifying and responding to needs ensures that children are learning very well indeed in the DAN classes. They are highly committed to making sure that the child's progression to the next school or class is as smooth and effective as possible. Teachers' planning is strong and it is focused very carefully on the children's needs. Staff use carefully prepared resources and very interesting activities to engage the children. Across the school, in the best lessons: - staff have a good knowledge of subjects and of pupils' individual needs - work is well planned and matched to differing needs - very good, trusting relationships exist - clear explanations are given to pupils - questioning probes and challenges - the pupils are clear what they are learning and doing - the pupils always take part in a review of their learning - lively teaching keep the pupils' engaged - good use is made of teaching assistants in any practical part of a lesson. The school keeps good detailed records on every child. These are used particularly well in the DAN classes and across the school to identify pupils who are making slower progress than the rest, such as those who need more help with reading or behaviour. Assessment in subjects has improved considerably. Excellent systems are in place for gathering information about how children are getting on and setting individual targets. Most teachers use the information from such assessments well to plan their lessons. Occasionally, more could be done to match work precisely to pupils' needs and in lessons the support staff do too much for the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and has much to commend it in terms of its richness and its overall breath of opportunity. The numerous initiatives and school awards have had a positive impact on pupils' learning. The programme of extra-curricular activities and residential school visits offer pupils a very good range of challenging activities, which pupils greatly enjoy. The excellent curriculum in the DAN classes is particularly successful in promoting pupils' communication skills and early literacy. The broad requirements of the National Curriculum are met, although some elements of design and technology and ICT are narrow. This is because of the lack of resources and investment in the past. The programme for PSHE addresses pupils' needs well. There are numerous opportunities for citizenship but these are not always co-ordinated or planned in a way which relates closely to a systematic programme of study. The school's focus on healthy lifestyles is clearly paying off in the way pupils think about themselves. Careers education and work related learning are fully embedded. The school tries very hard to tailor the curriculum to the needs and abilities of pupils and good programmes have been devised. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has been strengthened through the addition of several vocational courses. It is now more relevant to pupils, and links with other schools and college widen the opportunities available. The range of accreditation on offer has increased. However, a lot is squeezed into the programmes and not enough thought has been given to the flexibility of the curriculum in Key Stage 4 so that some time could be used more productively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. A very high level of care and concern for children in the DAN classes means they feel very safe to have a go at new experiences and are well set up for later learning. All requirements for child protection are fully in place. Pupils in all parts of the school have very strong, trusting relationships which support learning and personal development very well. The school's arrangements for dealing with any incidents of bullying are effective. Children are confident that adults will sort out any problems and keep them safe and secure. They know that their 'voice' will be listened to, whether about a playground incident or, through the school council, about things they would like to improve in the school. Staff work hard to help children think about and understand what they need to do to improve, whether through their individual targets or in lessons. The school makes very good use of the limited therapy and external support available. This is particularly so for communication, and for self help and independence skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership of the school by the headteacher is good and the deputy headteacher leads the DAN classes excellently. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are an effective team who complement each other's skills well. They have produced excellent systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision. Most of the judgements made before the inspection were largely accurate. There are also excellent systems in place for tracking children's achievements. The school is not yet analysing these as fully as it could to set accurate targets, although a good start has been made. The senior management team is forging ahead well with improvement. In most areas, such as with the improved roles and work of subject leaders, this has been good since the last inspection. It has been slower in ICT and design and technology. The team's ability to improve things further is good and they are absolutely determined to succeed. Staff morale is good. A senior teacher joined the team a year ago and has recently been made an assistant headteacher. This has ensured good day-to-day management of Key Stages 3 and 4. Staff absence and a need to maintain and improve provision in ICT led to the deputy headteacher taking this on temporarily. She has worked exceptionally hard to undertake all the tasks she has. However, in order to improve further monitoring and quality assurance, for which she has the lead role, a better balance of workload among senior management team needs to be achieved. Governors are kept well informed and are supportive. They keep a critical eye on many aspects of the school's work, such as how space is used in the building and building alterations. However, they need to be more aware of the progress that pupils make. Governance is satisfactory.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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	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

Your school is good and there are some outstanding aspects for you to celebrate. Thank you to those who met with me during the inspection. I was impressed with your self-confidence, thoughtfulness and politeness. Although a few younger pupils find it difficult to manage their behaviour, nearly all of you behave excellently. You thoroughly enjoy school and lessons and you do your school proud! I particularly praised: - the good progress you make and the excellent progress the children in the nursery make; in fact, everything that is done in the nursery is excellent - the way the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are working so hard to make the school a better place to learn, make progress and have fun - the good teaching, this is because the staff know you well and what you need to learn - the care and support the staff have for you. I have asked the school to improve the following: - what you learn in ICT, the way you and your teachers use ICT and the amount of ICT equipment - to reduce the amount of work the deputy headteacher has to do - the school tries to squeeze too much into the work you do in Years 10 and 11 and needs to think how it can use the time better - it needs to improve the equipment and the work you do in design and technology and to ensure that the many citizenship opportunities you have are better co-ordinated. Good luck for the future.