



# Villa Real School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114345  
**LEA** Durham  
**Inspection number** 279369  
**Inspection dates** 2 March 2006 to 3 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Alan Tattersall

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Villa Real Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Consett
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19		County Durham DH8 6BH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 503651
<b>Number on roll</b>	84	<b>Fax number</b>	01207 500755
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Judy Sunter
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 December 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Fiona Wood

<b>Age group</b> 2 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 2 March 2006 - 3 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279369
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Villa Real is an average sized school serving the whole of County Durham with a few pupils attending from outside the county. The number of pupils has increased considerably since the last inspection. There are three times as many boys as girls. Pupils have severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and challenging behaviour. Almost half the pupils receive free school meals. There are seven looked after children. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups. The school has difficulty in recruiting specialist staff for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The inspection judgement agrees with the school's own evaluation that it is a good school. Leadership and management are good. Governors and senior managers have enabled the school to make good improvements since the last inspection and show the ability to make further improvements. All classes now have provision for religious education. Self-evaluation has improved and is now good. This has led to effective plans for subject leaders to play a more effective part in making improvements to raise standards further. The school has developed excellent partnerships with others. Its success in making provision for an increasing number of pupils with more complex needs has raised the requirement for improved training, provision, and organisation to continue to meet fully those pupils' needs. Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils' achievement is good. Achievement and provision in the Foundation Stage are outstanding. Pupils throughout the school make good progress and are, consequently, well prepared for leaving. Parents confirm their children's views that they enjoy school and do well. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding.

The curriculum is good. Enrichment activities are outstanding. The school agrees that the curriculum should provide more choice and vocational education for pupils beyond Year 9. The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. The school gives good value for money.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The achievement and provision for students in the sixth form are good. This matches the school's own judgement. As a result of good teaching, students make good progress in developing their basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Students receive outstanding support for their learning and care. Links with the local college and work experience opportunities enrich students' learning well. Students have benefited well from vocational opportunities such as horticultural training. More opportunities are planned for the future. Their work is accredited mainly through ASDAN and they achieve well. Students will participate in a greater range of accreditation next year. They are prepared well for moving on to the next stage in their lives.

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

- Increase staff training and resources to continue to meet in full the needs of the increasing number of pupils with more complex learning difficulties.
- Involve subject leaders more in monitoring and evaluating their subjects to enable them to make improvements to the provision.
- Increase the opportunities for choice and vocational education for pupils beyond Year 9.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children begin school with standards in language, mathematics and personal skills that are well below expectations because of their learning difficulties. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children settle in to school remarkably well and concentrate on their work. This enables them to progress very well to enable them to attend mainstream schools or to be extremely well prepared for the next stage in their learning in this school. Results show that pupils achieve well throughout and the work in pupils' files demonstrates that they make good, steady progress. They progress well in learning the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and this enables them to achieve in other subjects. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology especially those who use the new interactive whiteboards. Pupils make good progress in all subjects because of the effective support that they receive and no group makes significantly different progress to any other. Pupils and students achieve well in ASDAN accredited courses by the time they leave school.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They enjoy school and have exceptionally good attitudes to learning. Parents confirm pupils' enthusiasm for school. These factors are important reasons why pupils achieve well. Attendance is in line with similar schools and is satisfactory; most absences are for medical reasons. A growing number of pupils are admitted to the school because of the difficulty they have in behaving well. Effective measures improve these pupils' behaviour to the extent that pupils throughout the school behave outstandingly well in and out of lessons. There have been no exclusions from school. Pupils appreciate the physical activities that they take part in and the guidance and encouragement that they receive, for instance, to eat healthily. Pupils understand the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. Pupils play a full part in helping the school run smoothly and in the wider community. They willingly support and help each other on many occasions. The school council provides a very good forum for pupils to share their many ideas to make the school a better place. Enterprise projects and the work related curriculum help to teach pupils the value of money. Pupils are very well prepared for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils learn well because of the good quality teaching. Teachers plan interesting lessons that pupils enjoy. They encourage pupils to develop exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Teachers meet the wide range of pupils' needs in class effectively. A particular strength is the way that the school ensures that teaching assistants make

an effective contribution to helping pupils learn. Several assistants take leading roles in lessons and around the school. For example, they provide expertise to help pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder or who need speech therapy. Teachers' effective use of learning resources makes a good contribution to the success of lessons. Teachers encourage pupils well. Pupils are proud to show visitors their completed work. The recent opportunities for teachers to use interactive whiteboards are leading to pupils beginning to make outstandingly good progress in using information and communication technology. However, such equipment is not regularly available throughout the school. The school has successfully implemented plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. It is recognised that subject leaders should play a greater role in improving teaching and learning in their subjects in order to raise standards further.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Enrichment activities are outstanding. Pupils participate in a wide variety of visits to extend their learning. For instance, a visit to the seaside deepens pupils' understanding of an environment described in their reading books. Pupils develop their spiritual awareness by visiting places of worship of different faiths. Many visitors broaden pupils' knowledge of the world around them and of music and art. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to continue to learn in the many out-of-school activities.

The school is responding well to the increasingly complex needs of many pupils through continually improving staff expertise. The increase in the number of pupils attending has led to a shortage of space and the school has prioritised the need to address issues of training, provision, organisation and accessibility for those pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder, challenging behaviour or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Specialist rooms such as for science and technology have been lost in order to provide space for pupils' other learning needs. However, the school uses the existing space imaginatively to ensure that pupils achieve well in all subjects. Despite these limitations of space, the school is beginning to respond well to the national initiative to improve the curriculum for pupils from Year 9. This includes providing pupils with a wider choice including more vocational courses.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance, and support are outstanding. The school pays exceptional attention to ensuring that pupils are cared for in a safe environment. Child protection procedures have improved well since the last inspection and are thorough and carried out effectively. Action is taken to ensure that health and safety measures are observed efficiently. Those pupils who are able to express an opinion are confident in the support that they receive and know who to go to if they have a problem. Pupils have ready access to staff who support them with personal and medical needs. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the standard of care that the school provides for

their children. They value the guidance given them to help their children at home. The school guides pupils' academic development well and their personal development extremely well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management have ensured that improvement since the last inspection has been good. The headteacher provides decisive and inspirational leadership. This has led to imaginative partnerships with the community to enrich the curriculum and provide enhanced care for pupils. She ensures a shared sense of direction from senior staff and governors, with a clear view for improving pupils' achievement. Governors have a good involvement in the life of the school and share its commitment to ensure that it is well staffed.

Good self-evaluation has identified correctly the most important areas for improvement. The school demonstrates the ability to achieve these aims. An important school development priority is for subject leaders to be involved more in evaluating their subjects and to determine how well pupils throughout the school are achieving. Early results of these evaluations are beginning to provide good information to help pupils achieve more. Most parents agree that the senior managers listen and respond well to their concerns. The school continues to take imaginative action to meet the challenge of the limitations of the accommodation and the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff with expertise in autistic spectrum disorder. It has begun implementing good plans to provide more staff expertise to support pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder.

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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	
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

<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	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	1
The attendance of learners	3	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

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

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Mrs Fiona Wood

Villa Real School

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DH8 6BH

4 March 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making me welcome in school. I enjoyed meeting and talking to you. You are very friendly and helped me to find out about the things that you do in school.

I am pleased to agree with your parents that this is a good school.

You are extremely interested in learning.

Your behaviour is excellent.

Teachers make sure that you make good progress.

The school looks after you exceptionally well and keeps you safe.

Your headteacher and governors do a good job.

I have asked the headteacher and governors to do the things that they have chosen to improve the school.

To improve the way that the school helps you.

For subject leaders to do more to enable you to learn more.

To provide pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form with more choice of subjects to learn, particularly to help with life after school.

Thank you for helping me. I hope that you continue to enjoy school and help to make it an even better place.

Best wishes

Mr A Tattersall

Inspector