



The Edith Borthwick School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115464
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279601
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Ian Naylor LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Fennes Road
School category	Community special		CM7 5LA
Age range of pupils	3 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01376 529 300
Number on roll	159	Fax number	01376 529 316
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Linda Mead
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Gary Pocock

Age group 3 to 18	Inspection dates 19 October 2005 - 20 October 2005	Inspection number 279601
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© 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 one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a school for pupils aged 4 to 19 with a range of learning difficulties. Pupils are from a predominantly White British heritage and their socio-economic circumstances reflect a cross-section of the community. Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment. All have statements of special educational needs. The types of learning difficulty and disability present in the school have altered significantly since the previous inspection. As well as pupils with moderate learning needs, there are now about a third of pupils with severe learning needs and about a third are autistic. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Intermediate Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspection findings are that this is a good school in which pupils thrive and enjoy their learning. Achievement is good and pupils make significant progress in their communication skills, independence and social maturity. Personal development is outstanding. Teaching is good and this supports pupils' learning and well-being. Pupils feel safe in school and are enthusiastic about their lessons. There are good relationships throughout the school. The curriculum is good and provides all pupils with a wide range of practical learning opportunities. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. There is excellent pastoral welfare and good procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils. The great majority of parents feel that the school is exceptional in the way it supports the progress of their child and offers a happy and safe learning environment. Leadership and management by the headteacher and senior leadership team are good. School governors give effective support to the school. There have been satisfactory improvements made since the previous inspection, particularly with regard to the teaching of pupils with autism. Although the premises have had some improvements, facilities remain limited and are an obstacle to even better learning. The headteacher and senior staff know what needs to be done next to make further improvement in all aspects of school and their actions show they have the ability to succeed. Their high expectations of teaching and learning and unfamiliarity with the new inspection system has led to them to be over-cautious and they have rated the school as satisfactory rather than good in line with the inspector's views. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in science. - Use pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) to support their progress across each of the other subjects. - Make activities in lessons for pupils with severe learning difficulties relevant and specific to their learning needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well overall. All post-16 students achieve well and many receive accreditation through Entry level GCSE or in Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses. They leave school with good social and communication skills which help them to be independent adults. Pupils make good progress across the school in their speaking and listening skills and in their reading. Progress in writing skills is satisfactory. Achievement in mathematics, particularly in the practical aspects, is good. Pupils learn number skills useful to

everyday life, such as counting money when shopping and making accurate measurements when preparing ingredients for meals. Pupils' progress in science is weak. The progress of pupils in the Transition Centre (for students aged 14 to 19) is exceptional, particularly their achievement in social and work-related skills. Many are able to make their way independently off-site to attend a local college for work-related learning and other courses. Records of students' achievement show that they achieve success across a wide range of social skills and in their relationships with adults. Pupils with autism make good progress, especially in their relationships and in their communications skills. A few pupils with the most severe learning needs make only satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. By the time they leave school, as a direct result of the school's high quality support, most pupils are very self-confident, independent and self-reliant. They are well prepared for the next phase of education or employment. Pupils are very friendly and tolerant of one another. They have superb relationships with staff. They work hard in lessons and cooperate well so that they achieve good success. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk proudly of their achievements. When asked, they say their school is 'brilliant'. As a result, attendance is good and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exceptional. Pupils show a good understanding of school and classroom rules and follow them well. Pupils make very good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through assemblies and in personal, social and health education lessons. For example, in an assembly they look at the difference between their own lives and the way that children dress, live and go to school in India. Students in the Transition Centre take courses at local colleges and this helps them in making a contribution to the community and to become aware of the world of work. They mix successfully with other adults. All pupils work hard in physical education lessons, trampoline sessions for physiotherapy, horse-riding and swimming. They understand the need for exercise to stay healthy. Pupils make their views known through the School Council and at class circle time. They feel that staff listen to what they have to say and try to meet their requests.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Most lessons are vibrant, relevant and give good support to pupils' learning and achievement through many high quality and well-planned practical activities. These engage pupils' attention and interest. They challenge pupils' thinking skills and support their communication skills. Teachers and teaching assistants work successfully together to support pupils. They have detailed knowledge and understanding of each pupil's personal and academic needs. They build good relationships with pupils that boost their self-esteem. Good use is made of specific

teaching techniques for pupils with autism, such as the use of signing and symbols. Teachers write behaviour plans that help pupils to reduce their challenging behaviours. Teachers generally plan well for lessons. They tell pupils what they will learn and how they can succeed. Assessment is good. Pupils are often asked to think about how well they have done in a lesson, and how they can improve further. Teachers do not consistently plan activities and opportunities in more detail for the lowest achieving pupils, to make sure their needs are met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It provides all pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities and meets national requirements. It has a practical approach that is relevant to pupils' needs. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but would be better if the outside learning environment was more stimulating. Students in the Transition Centre (14-19) have a dynamic curriculum in which each student has a timetable matched to individual learning and personal needs. A wide range of activities is provided both in school and off-site in the local community. Thinking skills, social, physical and creative skills are promoted very well. Groups of pupils such as those with autism, or those who have exceptional talents, have specific programmes to support their learning. There are excellent curriculum links with local colleges to provide extended opportunities for social skills development and work-related learning for post-16 students. Careers advice and support are effective and good use is made of external agencies. Weaker areas, which the school recognises and has plans to address, are the lack of planning for the use of pupils' information and communications technology skills to support their progress in the other subjects across the school, and the need to provide more relevant activities in science. The school constantly strives to improve its facilities, but is limited by space and lack of funding. The curriculum is enriched by many visits out of school and lunchtime clubs, as well as by successful weekly 'activities' sessions. These are designed to give pupils opportunities to build their competence and confidence in sport, leisure skills, music and the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is excellent pastoral welfare. The support provided by teaching assistants to pupils is exemplary. Staff have detailed knowledge of each pupil's learning, personal and welfare needs. There are good procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils; for example, the school has achieved the local authorities' Healthy Schools Intermediate Award. Good attention is given to health and safety assessments, risk assessments and to procedures for child protection, so that all staff know what they should do to keep pupils safe. There are outstanding joint working relationships by staff with the speech and language therapist, physiotherapists and with other professional partners and agencies. Home-school books give parents regular information about their child's daily progress in school. Staff involve parents and the pupils themselves when they prepare individual education plans. Additional support for pupils,

their parents, carers and families is now being developed through home visits and parent workshops. The appointment of five Family Workers is making a significant contribution to supporting the pupils, their parents and families.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has introduced successful management procedures to measure and improve the quality of teaching and learning, in order to meet the much wider range of pupil needs and abilities now present in the school. He is well supported by the senior leadership team. They have clear responsibilities, such as convening and leading pupils' annual reviews, which they fulfil very well. Subject leaders plan well to promote further improvements in their subject across the school. Senior staff are well aware of what they need to do next to secure improvements to teaching and to pupils' achievements. This is reflected in school planning. School governors give effective support to staff. They are experienced and knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There are good financial procedures and controls, an efficient school office and resources are well managed. The senior leadership makes particular effort to seek parental views about their child's progress through questionnaires and meetings for parents. The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of school. A very few parents feel the flow of information could sometimes be better between school and the parent.

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

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?	1	1

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

You may remember I visited your school recently. Thank you for making me feel very welcome. You were very friendly and helpful in the way you allowed me to visit your lessons and to look at your work. I would like to tell you what I found out about your school. This is a happy school and you all work hard to improve in your learning. You are very friendly to one another and to visitors. You behave well and love coming to school. Staff do their best to help you to understand and improve your work. They provide interesting activities in lessons which you enjoy and which help you to learn. You like the headteacher and staff and they are very caring. You do lots of exercise and eat healthy food. You know about keeping yourselves safe. I especially liked the way you get on with one another. You work hard and are learning to be more confident in doing things for yourselves. Older students do very well when they go to the college to learn about work and life after they leave school. There are some things that teachers need to do to help you even more. They need to provide more interesting and exciting activities to help you to improve your work in science. They also need to give you more time using computers in lessons. Each of you should have things you can do in lessons which are not too hard and not too easy, but which help you to succeed. With best wishes for the future,