



Wolverdene Special School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116635
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 279862
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Michael Farrell AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	22 Love Lane
School category	Foundation special		Andover
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Hampshire SP10 2AF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01264362350
Number on roll	44	Fax number	01264362350
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Pippa Grob
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Richard Ford

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Wolverdene School is a primary special school for boys and girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many have other learning difficulties including autistic spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It has weekly boarding provision for up to ten boys and the number of residents varies day to day because some children are offered placements for part of the week. On the day of the inspection, four boys were resident. There is only one child in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) and most children are in Years 4, 5, and 6. Around 20 children are eligible for free school meals and six children are in local authority care. The school has recently started to provide outreach services, having been accredited by the local authority. Learners travel into the school within a radius of fifty miles. One of the school's aims is to prepare children for transfer to other schools and consequently there is a high turnover of children. Some are reintegrated into mainstream schools and others into different special schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges its overall effectiveness as 'outstanding'. Because achievement, teaching and learning and the curriculum are good, the inspector evaluates it as a good school with some very strong features. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress because teaching is good, relationships are excellent and the curriculum is very well suited to their learning and emotional needs. The personal development and well being of children is outstanding and this is underpinned by the commitment of all staff and by very high quality care, guidance and support. Children enjoy their time at school and place great trust in the staff while parents value the school very highly. The school is well led and managed and staff work closely together creating a caring and well-organised community. Funds are used effectively and the school offers good value for money. The school recognises the need to ensure that in all lessons, what is to be learned is more clearly specified so that this improves the assessment of what children have achieved and enables the work of learning support assistants to be even better focused. The very well led residential provision is outstanding, offering a warm and friendly environment combined with necessary structure and security. Again members of staff work very closely as a team and liaise closely with teachers so that all staff are aware of how children are feeling and progressing. Wolverdene has made good progress since its previous inspection and is well placed to improve even further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 1

The school's boarding provision is outstanding. The most recent Commission for Social Care Inspection report of 2005 identified no areas in which the provision did not meet National Minimum Standards and the few points for further improvement in that report have been addressed. The provision is very well led and managed, having a very clear sense of purpose. Child protection procedures are strong. There is a very good structure for children at mealtimes and during activities, but the staff maintain a relaxed, friendly atmosphere which children greatly enjoy and appreciate. One child said, 'I really like it here'. Staff are very committed and work very well together as a team, including liaising very effectively with teaching and other staff in the school so that children feel secure and well cared for.

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that in all lessons, learning outcomes are precisely expressed and noted in planning before the lesson begins so that what children are expected to learn is clearer and can be better evaluated.* Improving teaching and learning by ensuring that all learning support assistants are fully aware of these learning outcomes so that their support focuses more sharply on them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school considers the progress of children to be good and the inspector agrees. Children arrive in school having different levels of previous attainment related to their special educational needs but generally they have gaps in their learning that are sometimes considerable. Although standards of attainment are low, children of all ages make good progress. There are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls or children who are looked after by the local authority. Children with additional special educational needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, also make good progress appropriate to their difficulties. Pupils make good progress towards suitable and challenging targets in their individual education plans. This is because of the good support provided by teachers, learning support assistants and other specialist staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Learners' outstanding personal development contributes to the good progress they make in school lessons. Good attendance reflects the children's great enjoyment of their learning and those in the residence also greatly value the provision there. Children try hard in lessons and respect others, for example, listening attentively as others speak. Because relationships between children and teachers and learning support assistants are excellent, children trust them and feel safe and secure with them. Asked by the inspector if there were times in the school when he did not feel safe, a child replied, "But I do feel safe". Children's very good behaviour is helped by the school's sensitive structures of support. They are polite and helpful and sympathise with others in distress as in an assembly about suffering in other parts of the world. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Members of the school council represent other children well. Children understand safe practices very well, playing ball games with consideration for others. Their very good commitment to a healthy life style includes enjoying fresh fruit snacks and enthusiastic participation in physical activities. Children work together in pairs or groups very well. They make valuable contributions to the community as when members of the school's council work to provide a coffee morning to raise money for a charity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school evaluates its teaching and learning as good and the inspector agrees. Good teaching contributes to the good progress children make in their lessons. Very good relationships lead to children behaving very well in lessons. In an outstanding lesson with a very clear structure the children's excellent behaviour and the well-chosen activity ('Taking your pet to the vet') encouraged excellent progress as children spoke

confidently about their experiences. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution in supporting children's behaviour and easing their anxieties. Where a lesson is satisfactory, learning outcomes are not specified precisely enough before the lesson starts and learning support assistants are less able to guide children towards the learning outcomes. Assessments, including the clear individual education plan targets, help teachers plan effectively what the child will learn next. Careful marking of children's work, for example, in writing, encourages children to continue trying and makes them aware of what they have to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In the school's good curriculum, children follow National Curriculum subjects with an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and personal development including sessions of 'emotional literacy'. The well-structured curriculum enables children to make good progress. It is enhanced by activities outside lesson times such as the very well planned and organised break times when eager children chose from a variety of quiet or active pursuits. Children are aware of health matters and issues relating to their well being because of the provision for personal and social education lessons and a wide range of regular physical activities including interschool sports. Children participate well in the school and community for example in the school council and in visits to local facilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of children are outstanding. Child protection procedures are very carefully followed and risk assessments are robust. Children feel safe and very well cared for because of the excellent trusting relationships with adults in the school. The challenging learning targets that are set and monitored enable the school to take appropriate action if progress is not as expected for example by focusing more on writing skills. Teaching and the support for children in the residence ensures that they are as aware as their age and development allows about keeping safe, developing personal relationships and health matters. The very close knowledge teachers and other adults have of the children contributes to the excellent provision. Play therapy makes a valuable and valued contribution to their emotional development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school judges the leadership and management of the school as outstanding. The inspector evaluates it as good because it has led to good achievement, good teaching and learning and good curriculum provision. A strength of leadership and management is its very strong development of team support. The very well led provision for care, guidance and support and residential provision are also strengths of the school. The well led and managed provision for the curriculum and teaching provision contributes

effectively to children's progress. Equal opportunities are very effectively promoted. The school's excellent links with others enhances the education and support of children. The school is working hard to provide for children's communication needs but there are difficulties in obtaining sufficient speech and language therapy support. The headteacher's strong, purposeful leadership and the very good support of senior staff set the tone and direction of the school well. The loyalty and industry of all staff and their commitment to very close teamwork is a powerful factor in the success of the school. Governors, knowing very well the school's strengths and areas in which it can improve, provide both strong support and challenge. Parents are extremely appreciative of all that the school does, saying, 'the school has rescued my son', and 'the teachers are fantastic'. The effective self-evaluation process which involves governors, parents and others very well, helps ensure that the school identifies where it needs to improve and to develop effective strategies to do so. For example, the school has correctly identified writing and numeracy as areas for development and is tackling these appropriately. The leadership and management of the school contribute strongly to the school's good capacity to improve.

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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>	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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	1	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	2	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	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me so welcome and for talking with me when I visited your school. I am writing to tell you what I found out.

There were many things that I liked about Wolverdene. All the staff work really hard for you and they work together very well. The residential part of the school is excellent and the way the school cares for you, and helps you to do better is too. You also told me that you like school very much.

There is something that the school can do even better. I have asked the teachers to make sure in every lesson that what you have to learn is really clear to you and your progress is checked at the end. This will also help make sure that the staff who support you will be able to check exactly what you have learned. Thank you again for being so kind to me.

Every good wish for your future.

Michael Farrell

Lead Inspector