



# The Coppice School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119893  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280682  
**Inspection dates** 4 April 2006 to 5 April 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Andrew Margerison

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Ash Grove
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Bamber Bridge
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19		Preston, Lancashire
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 336342
<b>Number on roll</b>	62	<b>Fax number</b>	01772 620826
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr George Woods
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 January 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Audrey Jenkins

<b>Age group</b> 2 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 4 April 2006 - 5 April 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280682
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

The Coppice School caters for pupils aged 2 to 19 years of age with severe and profound multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils have additional complex learning difficulties and medical needs. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Most pupils are of white-British origin, although a few are of Asian origin and have English as an additional language. When pupils start school, they are working at the earliest levels of attainment in relation to personal and academic skill.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school that prepares pupils extremely well for moving to the next phase of their lives. Inspection evidence fully supports the school's view of its own performance, except that pupils' personal development and the standards of care and support are both outstanding, rather than good. Teaching is good and pupils make good progress in their learning. Relative to their starting point, they achieve well. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good so the children get a good start to school, particularly in their personal development and ability to communicate with adults and each other. Pupils love being at school and are very keen to take part in anything the school has to offer. In the sixth form, the emphasis of the good curriculum shifts to preparing pupils for the future, academically, socially and personally. The school has recently introduced a new approach to involving them directly in managing the review meetings which are part of planning for their move from the school to work or college. This is extremely effective in ensuring that pupils feel part of the process and have the best possible guidance on their future. There is scope to extend this approach lower down the school to annual reviews and the transition between key stages. Procedures for assessing pupils' learning are very thorough and the school has recently begun to introduce a computer-based system to make it easier to track the progress of pupils over time. However, it is not yet in place throughout the school. The school's links with other schools and colleges are outstanding. The school is well led and managed and it has made good progress since the last inspection. It provides good value for money and is well placed to move forward in the future.

not applicable

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

### **Grade: 2**

Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that the provision for pupils in the sixth form is good. Its major strengths are the opportunities provided for pupils to develop the skills they will need to live as independently as possible and the recently introduced procedures for involving them very closely in the decisions that are made for their future. Although its accommodation is limited, the school makes excellent use of its links with other schools and colleges to provide a curriculum that prepares pupils very well for moving on to the next phase of their lives.

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

- Involve more pupils in review processes so that all pupils have the same opportunities to contribute fully to the decisions made about their future.
- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress by extending the recently introduced computer-based tracking procedures across the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Owing to the very low level of skills that pupils have when they start school and the nature of their learning difficulties, making comparisons between national averages and pupils' attainment is inappropriate. More importantly, relative to their starting point, pupils of all abilities, difficulties and backgrounds achieve well. In the Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress in developing their skills in all the areas of learning. They make very good progress in their personal development and communication skills. In Years 1 to 11, pupils build on this good start and make good progress in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, according to their level of ability, most pupils learn to express their ideas and opinions and to make choices. More able pupils are relatively independent and learn to use their literacy and numeracy skills in practical situations, such as shopping. All pupils gain external accreditation in these areas in addition to college certificates. This year, one pupil is on course to gain a GCSE in art and design through a link with a local high school. In the sixth form, pupils continue to make good progress, particularly in developing the skills necessary for independence. All pupils gain additional qualifications in areas such as basic skills, work-related learning, work experience, home management and leisure.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their excellent behaviour and attendance. Despite many pupils having medical conditions, attendance is well above average and pupils do not miss school unnecessarily. In lessons and other activities, pupils join in with great enthusiasm. They relish the opportunities they have to take part in clubs, activities out of school, and school events and productions. Pupils develop a very good understanding of how to stay safe in different situations, such as at work, in the home and when they are out and about. For example, all pupils take part in a local authority certificated road safety training programme taught by teaching assistants. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy life, eat sensibly and take plenty of exercise. Many of the pupils have specific dietary requirements and more able pupils learn to manage these themselves with minimal supervision from adults. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the school community through the School Council and by taking responsibility for jobs around school. As pupils move through the school, through working with pupils from local mainstream schools, visits, college links and work experience, they gain an increasing understanding of how they can contribute to the wider community. Coupled with their secure basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, all pupils, so far as they are able, are extremely well prepared for moving on to the next phase of their lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. The key strength of the teaching is the extremely strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. Staff understand their different roles and, as a result, all pupils are fully involved in lessons. In addition, this ensures that, although a few pupils have challenging behaviour as part of their difficulties, any incidents are managed very well. Disruption to the learning of other pupils is minimised as much as possible. Teachers' planning, based on good subject knowledge, ensures that activities in lessons are well matched to the needs of pupils and the targets that have been set for the key skills pupils need to learn next. As a result, lessons are positive learning experiences for pupils and they try really hard to complete the tasks set for them. The school is currently working on establishing a whole school approach to broadening the range of ways that pupils are taught to communicate by introducing a consistent and very carefully considered use of signing in all activities. Where it is fully in use, for example, in the Foundation Stage, the teaching of this aspect of pupils' learning is very effective, but this is a long term project and is not yet fully implemented in all classes. However, it is already having a positive effect on the pace of pupils' learning. Pupils' targets are displayed in classrooms and used effectively to involve pupils in discussing their own learning at the end of lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Pupils are provided with a broad range of relevant and interesting opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in many different ways. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is excellent and supports pupils' outstanding personal development. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is securely based on the national guidance for this age group, adapted to the individual learning needs of the pupils. The curriculum up to Year 11 reflects the National Curriculum and emphasises basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In the sixth form the emphasis, quite rightly, changes to preparing pupils for life after school. The curriculum is enriched by additional activities, lunchtime clubs, visits and visitors. These give all pupils the opportunity to take part in something that meets their needs and interests them; most of them take part. The school recognises that there is scope for extending these activities further and is currently investigating various options.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding. The rigour with which the school ensures the health and safety of its pupils and the very high standards of care provided

for them are particularly notable. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the way the school supports and looks after their children, many of whom have very individual and specific needs that require constant vigilance by staff and careful planning to meet them effectively. The guidance provided for pupils in the sixth form before they leave the school is excellent. The school has recently changed the format for review meetings so that pupils have much more control of the meetings. However, this excellent practice is not yet in place across the school when pupils move from one key stage to the next or for annual reviews. As a result, although all pupils are involved well, younger pupils do not have as much say in the decisions that are taken about their future as they might.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is well led and managed. The school, under the very clear guidance of the headteacher, has established highly effective procedures for evaluating its own work and identifying priorities for school development. These are based on excellent procedures used by senior managers and subject leaders for monitoring teaching and learning, and the use of data to check that pupils are making sufficient progress. In order to refine these systems and to make it even easier to identify any pupils who are not making the expected progress, the school has recently begun to introduce a computer-based tracking system. However, the system is not yet in place throughout the school and this limits the school's capacity to check easily that all pupils are doing as well as they can and to check the full effect of new initiatives on pupils' learning. All stakeholders, including governors and parents, are systematically involved in the self-review process and their views are taken into account. Overall, the school knows itself extremely well and is very good at identifying areas for development, although it is sometimes too modest in recognising its strengths. It is very well placed to continue the good progress since the last inspection.

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

### 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	1	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	1
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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PR5 6GY

4 April 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school this week and helping me with the inspection. You were all really helpful and it was a pleasure to work with you all. I would like to thank the School Council in particular, who willingly took the time to talk about their work and how they contribute to the life of the school. I am pleased to say that I agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school.

I was particularly impressed with your enthusiasm for school, by how much you enjoy lessons and by your behaviour. You are obviously very well prepared for moving on when you leave the school. You are also provided with outstanding care and support by all the staff and they pay great attention to making sure your needs are met. You are closely involved in school life, but I have asked Mrs Jenkins and the governors to make sure that you have more opportunities to contribute to the decisions that are made about your futures as you move through the school.

The main reason you go to a good school is the excellent way that Mrs Jenkins and the other staff check that you are being taught well and making good progress. Your school has recently started to use a computer system to track some pupils' progress more easily and I have suggested that this should be extended across the school to make sure you are all making as good a progress as possible.

Thank you again for helping me with the inspection and I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy Margerison

(Lead inspector)