



# The Clare School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 121261  
**LEA** NORFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 280966  
**Inspection dates** 26 January 2006 to 27 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Declan McCarthy LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	South Park Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community special		NR4 7AU
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01603454199
<b>Number on roll</b>	96	<b>Fax number</b>	01603451317
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Anna Gill
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Nigel Smith

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 26 January 2006 - 27 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280966
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a mixed, day community special school funded for pupils with learning difficulties associated with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments. Currently there are 96 pupils on roll, including 2 children in the nursery and 10 students in Post-16. Many of these pupils have complex medical needs and learning difficulties associated with their physical or sensory disabilities. Eight pupils have been diagnosed with degenerative conditions and five more pupils are currently being assessed for these. Pupils come from most areas of Norfolk and from parts of North Suffolk and they join or leave the school at any point in their school career. The socio-economic backgrounds of pupils are varied due to the wide intake. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and most have care plans. Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment. Nearly all pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The Clare is a good school which provides good value for money. Pupils flourish in its welcoming and caring atmosphere, which enables pupils to develop skills of independence and gain in confidence as they move through the school. As a result, their personal development is excellent. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by his deputy. Together they have developed a new and effective leadership team which is taking the school forward. Teamwork amongst all staff, including therapists, is very well developed. The teaching is good and lessons are interesting, however, the tracking of pupils' progress has yet to be consistently used within all subjects. Parents overwhelmingly express positive views about the school. Very good support from therapists and other professional staff impacts positively on pupils' progress. Children under five years old get a good start to school and make good progress. Provision is good. Although pupils' progress throughout the school is good overall, the academic progress of Post-16 students is only satisfactory. However, the students make very good progress in personal development and independence skills. Pupils think very highly of the school and staff do their utmost to make sure that all pupils do as well as they can in their lessons and also in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result, pupils are happy, enthusiastic in their learning, well behaved and rapidly gain in confidence. The inspection confirms that the school's evaluation of itself is accurate and its capacity to improve is good. The headteacher has made significant improvements to the curriculum, information and communication technology (ICT), accommodation and resources, and these improvements impact positively on pupils' progress. The school knows exactly what it needs to do to improve further. For example, it has already begun to improve earlier weaknesses identified in teaching and the headteacher is working with governors and the local authority to seek improvements in school meals. Some subject leaders have begun to monitor their subjects in lessons and the school recognises that this is an area for further development.

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

- Further develop assessment systems and their use across subjects. - Ensure all co-ordinators fulfil their management responsibilities by developing their monitoring roles. - Work closely with the local authority to improve the range and quality of school meals to promote healthy eating.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make consistently good progress through their individual education plan (IEP) targets. The school has met its own challenging targets, with improved results in 2005. Pupils make good academic progress and very good progress in personal development. Children in the Foundation Stage rapidly gain communication and other personal skills. Pupils in key stages 2 to 4 make good progress academically and in their personal and

social development. Pupils' progress in mathematics and in ICT is consistently good across the school. Lessons are sharply focused on ensuring that work is matched to the wide range of individual needs, with a strong emphasis on developing communication and social interaction tasks. The excellent teamwork with support staff and therapists ensures that all pupils, including those with autism, profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), medical needs and those with sensory impairments make progress equal to that of their peers. There are no significant differences in the progress made by boys and girls or pupils of different backgrounds. Pupils acquire the basic literacy, numeracy and independence skills that are essential in preparing them for adult life. Students at Post-16 make satisfactory progress academically but good progress in their personal development. Nearly all students enter further education with a range of certificates and the school has recently introduced further accredited courses to improve their academic performance. Pupils and Post-16 students also learn to work together and to take responsibility so that they develop the social skills for life beyond school.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well being are outstanding. Children under five years of age have a good start in school and pupils of all ages are very enthusiastic about their school, as reflected in their very good attendance and punctuality. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning together; they say they enjoy school and this is confirmed by all parents. Pupils' positive response leads to excellent behaviour. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Pupils with more complex communication needs quicken their social development as they become skilled in the use of pictures, symbols, switches and signing to communicate. The school successfully raises pupils' self-esteem, as the smallest achievements are recognised and celebrated through, for example, the award of certificates at the weekly 'celebration of achievement' assembly. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and show initiative. For example, Post-16 students have the confidence to help and care for younger pupils in school. They help younger pupils with horse riding and assist mainstream school teachers by supporting children in the reception class. Members of the school council are actively involved in making decisions and make a positive contribution to school. For example, they have lobbied staff to improve the quality of school lunches and they have helped to ensure a wider range of lunchtime activities and more toys for the playground. Pupils learn to stay healthy. They adopt healthy lifestyles through regular physical exercise, with the excellent involvement of the physiotherapist, occupational therapist, and the school nurse. However the quality and choice of school meals does not fully promote healthy eating. Opportunities for work experience in the community, work shadowing in school and the 'Young Enterprise' initiative prepare older pupils and students effectively for life after school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are usually good and are sometimes excellent. The school's effective monitoring of teaching identified a few unsatisfactory lessons, in the previous academic year. This was mainly due to staffing difficulties, beyond the school's control. Nevertheless the school has already effectively addressed this so that the quality of teaching now is never less than satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned so that the needs of individual pupils, including those with sensory impairments and PMLD are taken into account. Teachers make consistent use of signing and sensory resources such as switches, communication and visual aids in delivering stimulating lessons that captivate pupils' imaginations and make learning fun. As a result, pupils are well motivated, are focused on their activities and try their hardest. Teaching assistants, therapists and specialist teachers for the sensory impaired support the learning of all pupils, including those with PMLD, very effectively. They ensure that tasks, methods and resources are precisely matched to pupils' needs. For example they use the picture exchange system effectively with pupils who have limited communication skills. All staff know their pupils very well. Teachers explain clearly what pupils are going to learn and check at the end of the lesson how well they have done. There are some good systems of assessment in place which include advice from therapists. The tracking of pupils' progress is used effectively by some teachers in planning. However these systems have yet to be consistently used within all subjects.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is highly relevant to the needs of all pupils. It includes a very well thought out sensory curriculum and a strong emphasis on developing independence skills. Personal, social, and health education permeates the life of the school with enjoyment of learning and building confidence at its heart. The curriculum at Post-16 is satisfactory and improving. The school has recently introduced more opportunities for students to gain accreditation for what they do. Older pupils and Post-16 students also participate in careers education and work experience and are offered good choices in their learning. The youngest children engage in well thought out activities which include a range of sensory experiences, and an emphasis on communication and language, numeracy and physical development. Pupils with more complex needs are extremely well supported by therapists, specialist teachers and health professionals. Learning is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences and personal development. The school provides a very wide range of lunchtime clubs and activities and pupils also benefit from the school scout group, residential experiences, and summer and weekend activities. The school has established very good links with the local Sports Park to enhance physical education and further improve the attention given to pupils' healthy lifestyles. The use of ICT has greatly improved and pupils use this effectively, which further promotes enjoyment of learning. The

accommodation is good. It is well maintained and has been greatly improved under the headteacher's direction. School signs incorporate visual and tactile markers such as symbols and Braille. Classrooms are more attractive and pupils' work is now well displayed throughout the school. There is an excellent new sensory room equipped with the latest technological aids to stimulate learning for pupils with PMLD. The outdoor environment has recently benefited from the addition of high quality play facilities, such as a special roundabout with access for wheel chair users. As a result there are extended opportunities for play and physical activities for all.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are cared for exceptionally well. All staff, including therapists, are totally committed to ensuring that pupils learn and grow in a safe and supportive environment. The strong partnerships with parents, medical professionals and other outside agencies ensure that pupils' needs are fully met. As a result, all pupils including those with sensory loss and PMLD, achieve well in relation to their personal targets. The arrangements for protecting children are fully in place and involve close collaboration with outside agencies. Risks are carefully and thoroughly assessed so that pupils are safe and secure. There is excellent support for pupils and their families, especially at times of bereavement and during transition between schools. For example, the headteacher has created an attractive quiet room which pupils or parents can visit in order to reflect and spend time alone. All pupils trust and greatly respect adults as well as showing the utmost care and consideration for one another. Post-16 students and older pupils receive good careers advice through the 'Connexions' service. Parents and pupils are involved in the regular reviews of progress, for example during annual reviews of statements and at transition reviews. Their views are carefully considered and as a result they feel very well informed.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good and the school has a good capacity to improve further. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has developed more effective partnerships with parents, outside professionals and the community. As a result, he is well respected by all. The headteacher has introduced effective improvements to the curriculum, accommodation, resources and monitoring of all aspects of the school's work. Self-evaluation is now used effectively so that the school knows what it does well and where it could be even better. For example, it has rightly identified the need to improve further the use of assessment, in order to determine how well all pupils are doing in each of their subjects. The deputy headteacher and new senior leadership team provide good support for the headteacher and play a key role in checking how good lessons are and in the performance management of staff. Subject leaders have audited their subjects effectively and through effective action plans, they know what needs to be done to continue improving their subjects. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and leadership of Post 16 provision is

satisfactory. A few subject leaders have begun to monitor their subjects in lessons and the school recognises that this is an area for further development. All staff are committed to the individual needs of pupils and they involve all in school activities. This is clear, in the effective way pupils with more complex learning needs such as sensory impairments and PMLD are supported and achieve their targets. School governance is good. Governors ensure that all policies are in place and are actively involved in school improvement and financial planning. They work closely with the school, and effectively check the school's performance. For example they receive and scrutinise presentations from subject leaders and they attend professional development days with the staff.



**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](http://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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### 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	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	2	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<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	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	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<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**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I recently visited your school. I am writing to tell you what I think about your school. I think your school is good. Your teachers, support staff and therapists all help you to make good progress. They help you to communicate with each other and do more things for yourselves. They care about you extremely well and you always have some one to go to if you feel worried or upset. Staff make sure you are very safe in the playground and around the school. I was also very impressed with the way older students help younger ones in activities such as horse riding. You behave extremely well, you care about each other very much and you are very kind to visitors. You have a very good School Council which helps you to make decisions about your school. You tell the staff what you like about school and how to make it even better, such as your suggestion to improve school meals. You greatly enjoy learning because all staff are very kind to you. Your headteacher runs your school exceptionally well. He works closely with your teachers, teaching assistants, therapists and parents to make it even better. I have asked your teachers to make sure everyone knows how well you are doing in all your subjects. I have also asked your subject leaders to keep checking how good teaching is in their subjects. Finally, I have asked the school to work closely with Norfolk County Council, to improve the quality of your school meals. It was great to see you all doing your best. So keep it up.