



Fiveways Special School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123944
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281596
Inspection dates 6 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Sarah Mascall RISP

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Victoria Road
School category	Community		Yeovil
Age range of pupils	4 to 19		Somerset BA21 5AZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01935 476 227
Number on roll	67	Fax number	01935 411 287
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Mark Collis

Age group 4 to 19	Inspection dates 6 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	Inspection number 281596
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Fiveways is a special school for pupils with complex learning difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational need and pupils' attainment on entry is well below national expectations. There are 65 pupils on roll, at present, the majority of whom have severe learning difficulties. Fifteen per cent of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders and 30 per cent have either additional physical or medical needs. Pupils come from all over the county of Somerset. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and 15 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are five pupils in the care of the local authority.

In January of this year the school suffered severe damage from a fire, which destroyed nearly half of the school buildings. The rebuilding is unlikely to be completed until November 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school judges itself to be a good school; however inspectors disagree and feel that Fiveways is an outstanding school and provides excellent value for money.

The school has many strengths, not least of which is the excellent leadership and management of the senior management team. The headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure all staff have high expectations of what can be achieved. There is a child centred approach to all that the school does and as a result all staff want the best for the pupils and work hard to ensure that all do well. Data is used well to track the pupils' progress but the same data could be more effectively used to identify areas of strength and weakness in the school's work. Pupils benefit from very good teaching which, together with the high quality work of the support staff, ensures that pupils make very good and on occasions excellent progress. Children have a very good beginning in the Foundation Stage which sets them up well for the rest of their education. All pupils make excellent progress in their personal development, and the care and support they receive is exceptional. The outstanding opportunities for pupils to attend mainstream schools and colleges provide them with an excellent range of experiences both academically and socially. The good curriculum is being improved further and this together with the excellent range of activities ensures that pupils are given extremely good opportunities to learn.

The governing body are very effective and know the school well. The commitment of all those involved in the school is outstanding and ensures that the school has a great capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- To bring about further improvements to its effectiveness the school should:
- make better use of the excellent range of data on pupils' achievements it has gathered to analyse more closely what is successful and what could be improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make very good progress in their learning and for a number of individuals progress is excellent. By the time they leave school pupils gain passes in entry level examinations and ASDAN. Children benefit from a well structured environment in the Nursery and make very good progress in developing skills that will help them to learn. They are learning to respond to staff whether through sign or voice and many are making excellent progress in their personal and social education. They sit in groups and respond to questions such as choosing whether to have apple or banana for their snack. From this very good starting point in the Nursery, pupils, as they get older,

make very good progress in literacy, particularly in developing their communication and writing skills. Pupils really enjoy mathematics and make very good gains in their numeracy skills. They do exceptionally well in learning to use mathematics in everyday situations. This is particularly evident amongst those pupils in Post 16 who work out the cost of a meal, plan the shopping and ensure they have the right money to buy the ingredients they need. Post 16 pupils make excellent progress in their learning to become independent individuals. They have a very good understanding of how to manage in a range of situations and are developing their self-help skills extremely well.

The school sets itself challenging whole school targets for pupils in Years 3 to 11, expecting pupils to make considerable improvements. Very good progress is made in meeting these targets and there are appropriate plans to set targets for the Foundation Stage and Post 16.

Discussions with parents and the school's own questionnaire confirm that parents consider their children are doing very well indeed. One parent commented that her child was achieving in ways she never thought she would be able to do.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is very successful in achieving its aim to enable pupils to develop independence and grow into mature young adults, ready to benefit from the next stage of their life once they leave.

Pupils clearly enjoy all aspects of school and consequently, their attitudes to learning are extremely positive. They are enthusiastic about their work and keen to participate in all the activities. Parents commented on how much their children enjoy school and "can't wait 'til the end of the weekend". This is reflected in the very good attendance of most of the pupils. However a number have serious health problems and this means that attendance overall is satisfactory rather than good.

Pupils show considerable care and respect for each other and work very well together. They gain in confidence and maturity and parents are particularly appreciative of how well pupils develop their social skills. Pupils have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and this is reflected in the exceptionally good behaviour in and around the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to appreciate the world around them and to reflect on life particularly in the excellent daily assemblies. Pupils are also developing an understanding about major world faiths and do a considerable amount to raise money for charity. As yet pupils do not have a say in the way the school is run and the school is actively looking at how to develop this aspect. Pupils do though contribute a great deal to the local community and are very much involved in it both through work experience and visits to the local area. The school fayre is very well attended and pupils show off their business skills through their mini-enterprise. Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy eating and are well supported in this by the very good school lunches. Post 16 students are very clear about what is healthy

and what is not and through cooking meals on a regular basis they ensure their diet is well balanced.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are very good. There is a real sense of commitment amongst all staff to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. There is an excellent understanding of all pupils' special needs and how best these needs can be met. For example, symbols and sign are used very well by all staff and communication is a strength of the school. Teachers ensure that the work is interesting and involves as many practical activities as possible. This is particularly evident in mathematics where very good use is made of the links with a local football team. As a result in one class pupils are learning about Venn diagrams and bar graphs through recording the number of games won, lost and drawn by the team.

There are very good relationships between staff and pupils, which are used to very good effect. Staff sense when a pupil is getting distressed or losing attention and immediately step in to support and challenge them in a different way. Support staff are very effective. They work very well with teachers and encourage and guide pupils to do their best.

Teachers record pupils' progress on a regular basis and use this information well to set targets that are appropriate and challenging. The work set is matched to the needs of the individual so that although the class may be doing the same task pupils are all given different ways to achieve.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent range of activities supplement the curriculum very well and enable all pupils to learn. As a result the curriculum as a whole is very good. The school is in the process of revising and developing what pupils learn so that the work they do is based more around topic work. It has established effective systems which ensure that there is enough time given to enable pupils to study all subjects. The changes to the curriculum are very much in line with the school's aim to provide "developmentally related experiences which respond to pupils' individual needs". The work related activities and the focus on encouraging pupils to be independent are excellent. These are well supported by the personal, social and health education programme, which ensures pupils develop a good understanding of issues such as drugs awareness and aspects of citizenship. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to work in mainstream settings. Outstanding links have been established with a number of schools

and colleges, which ensure that pupils have a very wide range of experiences that enable them to develop both academically and socially.

Pupils are given an excellent range of visits which are carefully planned to ensure that pupils gain from each one. Trips to 'Bristol', the theatre and historical monuments, are but a few. Students in Post 16 organise and gain from trips that support their independence such as going out for meals, trips to the theatre and bowling. Their enthusiasm and very good recall of what they saw and did reflect the benefits these visits have for them.

Careers education starts in Year 7 with pupils learning about working in shops, garden centres and other places of work. As they get older they have very good opportunities to have experiences in work placements. The community is used very well to support the curriculum and excellent links with other schools have been established which provide considerable benefit to pupils' learning experiences.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care of all pupils is given a very high priority in the school and is outstanding. Pupils are treated with respect and sensitivity. The whole staff team, including all support staff, recognise the very real danger of making pupils dependant on them, and ensure that pupils learn to develop genuine independence of thought and action. The separate provision for post 16 pupils is a very good example of this, enabling students to learn to look after themselves in preparation for life when they leave school. There is a very good focus on the welfare of all pupils and there has been particular attention paid to the school's approach to promoting a healthy lifestyle. All staff show care for the pupils; for example, the school cook checked that pupils had eaten their lunch and that all was well with them. There is a very good focus on ensuring the school is a safe environment and child protection policies and risk assessment procedures are appropriate. The rebuilding work has enabled the school to ensure that all areas are accessible to pupils and the purchase of an adjoining house has gone some way to resolving concerns about access for Post 16 students.

Pupils receive very good support and guidance to make sure they achieve as well as they can. There is good evidence to show that pupils make very good progress against the targets they are set. Individual education plans are of good quality and targets are realistic. As they get older they are involved in setting their own targets and are aware of what their targets are.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the whole staff team. He has a very clear vision of how the school can keep improving and motivates all his staff to

make it happen. He works in a highly effective partnership with his excellent deputy, who is a very good role model for all classroom staff. This high quality leadership has enabled the whole school community to survive the potentially disastrous effects of a recent fire. By enthusing and mobilizing everyone involved, the school has already, in a few short months, ensured that it has been virtually rebuilt and hugely improved.

The school has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement, through a very well structured approach to evaluating what it does well and what could be improved upon. All school developments are focused on meeting the learning needs of pupils and as a result the school improvement plan is a highly practical vehicle for continuous improvement of all aspects of its work. There are many initiatives that provide opportunities for pupils to be involved in the wider community and be educated in mainstream settings. The school has amassed a very good range of data about pupils' achievements and this is used well in checking pupils' individual progress. What the school does not yet do, is look more closely at the data and analyse specific aspects such as why pupils make better progress in some areas than in others. The school has a considerable capacity to keep on improving its provision and effectiveness.

Governors know the school very well and have been extremely supportive particularly in supporting staff and dealing with the aftermath of the fire. Finances are used very well and the governing body have been very prudent to ensure that there are sufficient funds to continue with the process of updating and extending the buildings and facilities.

Grade: 1

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
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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?	1	1
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	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	1

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	1	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	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
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?	1	1
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	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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

Fiveways School Victoria Road Yeovil Somerset BA21 5AZ

7th October 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for making Steve and myself so welcome in your school. You were all very polite and helpful and we enjoyed meeting you. Steve and I are looking forward to trying the marmalade that you made for your school fayre. I would like to particularly thank Alex for cooking my lunch which was very nice. Steve and I were very impressed at how well you all had managed with all the changes since the fire.

You have an excellent school and these are the things we liked most:

your headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent and make sure that the school runs very well

you work very hard and you have very good teachers. Because of this you learn a great deal in school

your teachers and all the staff look after you very well and help you grow up into very sensible young adults

you do a lot of activities and visits that help you learn and you have excellent chances to learn what it is like to go to work

you are able to go to a lot of different schools and colleges to work and make friends.

To make things even better we have suggested one thing that the school should now do:

the school has lots of information about how well you do and it could make better use of this to help you do even better.

Thank you again and we wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah J Mascall

(Lead inspector)