



Heathside School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124909
LEA SUFFOLK LEA
Inspection number 281835
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
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	Heath Road
School category	Community special		IP4 5SN
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01473 725508
Number on roll	73	Fax number	01473 724419
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Gordon Cochrane
Date of previous inspection	3 April 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Odran Doran

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Heathside is a special school for pupils with a wide range of communication, physical, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. It serves a wide urban and rural area of south Suffolk. Pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds. All pupils' achievements are significantly lower than that typical for their age and all those of school age have a Statement of Special Educational Need. About a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals. About a quarter of pupils have dual placements.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Heathside is a good school in which there are a number of outstanding strengths. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation. The school has sustained its strengths in provision as highlighted at the last inspection. There is consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching which ensures that pupils make rapid progress from the time they join the school. Overall pupils' achievement is good. In specific areas such as communication, personal and social skills, achievement is often outstanding. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make exceptional progress in their communication skills. Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and the school gives good attention to ensuring that pupils are safe and healthy. The curriculum has strengths in the core communication skills and through the extensive programme of personal social and health education (PSHE) and in physical education. However, some subjects are not planned for as extensively as others over the school year. Teachers could record pupils' individual progress in the classroom more closely. The school has been especially successful in establishing dual placements for pupils in local primary schools and supporting others in local pre-school settings. There is good leadership. Staff work harmoniously in teams and as a result there is outstanding provision for the care, welfare and pastoral needs of pupils. There is excellent liaison and collaborative working with other professionals and services. There is good school self-evaluation and a good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop planning and class timetables to ensure that pupils study all subjects of the curriculum in a structured and progressive way. - Improve the quality and immediacy of the recording of pupils' progress and achievements in lessons so that assessment more precisely informs the next steps in learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their achievements. The school feels that pupils' achievements are outstanding. School records, individual education plans, assessments and analysis of data about the progress of pupils concentrates principally on the core areas of communication skills, literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills and these show outstanding progress and achievement for most pupils. However, across the wider range of subjects, evidence from lessons and pupils' work shows that progress is less well recorded or defined. Often achievement in these areas is good, for example, in art and music. There is good achievement by the end of the Foundation Stage where pupils make rapid and outstanding progress in communication, and personal development skills from very low levels of attainment when they join the school. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make outstanding progress in their communication skills because teachers use effective teaching strategies. Many pupils make outstanding

progress in their physical skills as a result of the good teaching in physical education, and through the support of the 'Movement Opportunities Via Education' programme (MOVE). A significant number of pupils have successful dual placements in primary schools and pre-school settings where their communication, personal, and social skills are further extended. One or two each year achieve full time places in primary schools. Pupils make a successful transition to secondary special school education at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The promotion of pupils' personal development is an outstanding feature of the school's work. Pupils clearly enjoy being at school. Their attendance is very good and they behave well. They have very positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to participate in the activities that are provided. They take pride in celebrating their achievements and those of others in assemblies. The school does excellent work in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has exceptionally good provision for encouraging its pupils to develop an understanding of a safe and healthy lifestyle. It does this routinely through its culture and ethos, and formally via its PSHE programme and many visits into the community. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They help within the school, such as taking the register from classrooms to the office, and also within the wider community through the school's support for local and national charities. Pupils' good progress in developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills helps to prepare them well for moving onto secondary school and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are taught well in the large majority of lessons, and on occasions teaching is of very high quality. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils very well and they have a detailed understanding of their learning difficulties. Lessons are prepared well, classrooms are organised efficiently and teaching assistants are deployed effectively. A particular strength is the teamwork between staff and their close collaboration with other professionals. The expertise of the Advance Skills Teachers produces excellent role models for staff. Very good use is made of strategies to assist pupils' learning such as the 'Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children' (TEACCH) and 'Picture Exchange Communication System' (PECS). It uses the MOVE programme effectively to support pupils' physical mobility and motor responses. Teachers have well-established routines that pupils understand and follow. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils, and high quality interactions are a feature of all lessons. Consequently, pupils feel involved and supported. They enjoy lessons and have a positive attitude towards their learning. Staff manage the sometimes difficult and

challenging behaviour of a few pupils in an unassuming but effective way. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The school is now using a commercially produced package to record pupils' achievements, and this provides detailed information over time. However, other features of assessment procedures are less effective, particularly in relation to on-going assessment in the classroom. Staff do not record pupils' small gains in learning in lessons with sufficient precision or in a consistent way. As a result, teachers do not always have detailed assessment information available to plan future learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and has a number of strengths. Children in the nursery follow a good Foundation Stage curriculum. There is an appropriate emphasis on promoting all aspects of the children's communication skills and their personal and social development. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. There is a strong PSHE programme, and the curriculum is enhanced by many off-site visits, the input of therapists and visitors into school. Some pupils' learning needs are met extremely well through partnerships with other schools. Subject leaders have produced effective long-term plans for their subjects, and class teachers' termly plans generally reflect these. However, this is not the case for all subjects. For instance, history and geography do not appear on class timetables and there is insufficient planning to show how subject matter and skills might be covered in a cross-curricular way through other subjects. Consequently, there are no guarantees that the overall curriculum is sufficiently balanced or broad in all subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school has very robust procedures for safeguarding pupils. The staff team provide excellent care, welfare and pastoral support to pupils. There is superb liaison and joint working with therapists, a host of other professionals and agencies. There are rapidly extending links with many local primary, nursery schools and playgroups where dual placements give additional support to pupils' social and communication skills and provide opportunities for inclusion. Staff are committed to ensuring that pupils are healthy with very good attention to regular exercise, and healthy eating. Staff are very proficient in planning pupils' targets in their individual education, care and behaviour management plans and when writing reports for annual reviews. Pupils' health needs are closely monitored by staff in conjunction with health staff. Staff have great expertise and give superb assistance to enable pupils to have access to a wide range of specialist resources, facilities and equipment that serve their learning and personal needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher continues to provide good direction to the school and, together with the deputy head teacher, has moulded a staff team that is very experienced and dedicated. Teamwork is at the centre of the school's success in ensuring the continuity of its good teaching and in promoting pupils' achievements. A high priority is placed on the continuing professional development of staff and the induction and training of new staff. The school improvement plan is realistic and achievable in its scope and purpose. School governors give valuable support to the leadership and to staff. A particular strength has been the outreach work through the deployment of the Advanced Skills Teachers who have successfully established the dual placements for many pupils in primary schools and pre-school settings. As well as promoting pupils' achievements this has extended teacher expertise and skills both at Heathside and for the recipient schools and has enhanced the school's growing reputation as a centre of excellence. There is good consultation with parents and the school provides them with good information and support. All the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. Although planning of the curriculum has been improved in many ways, there is an imbalance that affects pupils' entitlement to certain subjects. School self-evaluation is good and the school has a similar capacity for further improvement.

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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	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

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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	1	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

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?	3	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	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

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	NA
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

You may remember that my friend and I visited your school recently. Thank you for making us so very welcome in your school. We were very pleased with what we saw when we visited your classrooms. You all seem very happy and work very hard. You take part enthusiastically in all the many activities that your teachers provide. The school has a very friendly and happy outlook. You are all making good progress, especially in the way you communicate and in your personal and social skills. You attend regularly and your behaviour is good. We were especially pleased to find that many of you also attend other nurseries or schools each week and that you are doing extremely well in mixing with and learning alongside the children there. We think that your teachers and staff do a good job and that you are well taken care of in your personal needs. The headteacher leads the school well with the help of other senior staff and the governors. In order to help you even more we think that you should have a wider range of activities in some subjects and that teachers could improve the way that they take note of your achievements so that they know exactly what you need to learn next. With best wishes for the future