



# Lever Park School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 131692  
**LEA** Bolton  
**Inspection number** 282247  
**Inspection dates** 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Ms Caroline Broomhead HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Stocks Park Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Horwich
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16		Bolton, Lancashire BL6 6DE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 332666
<b>Number on roll</b>	36	<b>Fax number</b>	-
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr D Vickery
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 September 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr C Roscoe

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 September 2005 - 22 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 282247
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

## Description of the school

Lever Park School in Bolton is a 42-place special school for boys aged 11 - 16 who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are currently 33 boys on roll. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and many have additional educational or medical needs, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Three quarters of pupils are entitled to free school meals and two thirds have been involved in youth offending.

The school was removed from special measures following its last inspection in November 2003, which was carried out by HMI under Section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Lever Park cares very well for its pupils and provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. The headteacher and his staff have been successful in sustaining improvements since the last inspection and have begun to address some of the weaknesses identified. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and some achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, which for most is well below national expectations, particularly in literacy. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enhanced by the specialist expertise, which is provided through other schools and services. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and there are examples of very good practice. The senior managers have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses but the school's approach to self-evaluation and strategic planning is inadequate. The school is well regarded by parents who are rightly proud of their sons' achievements since coming to the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Systematically evaluate all aspects of the school's work to identify priorities and establish a strategic plan for improvement.
- Increase the percentage of teaching which is good or better, with a particular focus on extending the range of activities to engage pupils' interest and promote their learning.
- Improve attainment in literacy skills and enable pupils to develop and apply those skills across the curriculum.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Most pupils arrive at the school with a history of disrupted schooling and standards of attainment, which are well below those expected of their age. They make at least satisfactory progress in their learning and for some, particularly those whose attendance is good, their achievements are very good. At key stage 3, in 2005, 4 out of 7 pupils achieved results in their national tests in mathematics and science, which were in line with national expectations and represented good progress for those pupils. The pupils at Key Stage 4 achieve well across a range of subjects at GCSE and Entry Level. Grades in GCSE range from C to G, and most achieve Level 3 in Entry Level Certificates. They are encouraged to enter external examinations as soon as they are ready and this is sometimes a year earlier than normal. For example, in 2005, 9 pupils in Year 10 achieved GCSE in science, three of these at grade C, which represented very good progress. This motivates them to achieve even higher in Year 11. Pupils' literacy skills remain underdeveloped and are a barrier to learning in some lessons.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Provision for the pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to select healthy foods and to adopt healthy lifestyles. They are aware of the risks to their health and know how to keep themselves safe, although some need gentle reminders on occasion. They enjoy the activities which are available to them at breaks, lunchtimes and after school, such as football. The pupils know right from wrong and show their concern for others for example when learning about the effects of the recent Tsunami on people's lives. Most pupils have a positive attitude to school and are keen to achieve their best. Behaviour around school is generally calm and any inappropriate behaviour is managed effectively. The pupils enjoy the rewards which good behaviour brings, for example, the options on Friday afternoons. They are also proud of the awards and recognition they receive in assemblies. Through the school council and surveys the pupils make their views known about what they think is good about school and what could be improved. They feel that the school is now a much calmer and safer place than it used to be a few years ago. There has been a slight improvement in attendance and the school is continuing to try to improve this further. Through the school's mini enterprise projects and links with the local community, the pupils learn about working life and begin to develop their economic awareness.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There has been considerable development in the introduction of a whole school approach to teaching and learning. Regular monitoring has highlighted aspects of teaching, which should be improved further and appropriate advice has been given. As a result the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Nearly half of lessons observed by the inspector were good or better whereas others were just satisfactory. The very good relationships between staff and pupils contribute significantly to the pupils' progress and achievements. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support learning as well as behaviour. In general teaching is better where teachers have specialist expertise and therefore more confidence in their subjects. The headteacher has taken steps to appoint specialists and to buy-in expertise from other schools and services. Teachers have appropriate opportunities to up-date their subject knowledge, for example through networks with local secondary schools. Recent training has raised their awareness of additional support needs and the implications for their teaching. Through its whole school approach to assessment, the school is establishing a good database of information about pupils' progress in different subjects but this is not yet used as well as it could be to inform lesson planning. Basic skills are taught daily in all class groups and a small group also receives additional teaching twice weekly from a local

authority specialist team. More could be done to ensure that pupils develop their literacy skills across the curriculum.

The best lessons are well planned and take account of the pupils' interests and abilities. They start by capturing the pupils' interest and end with activities, which continue to develop their understanding further. There has been substantial investment in interactive whiteboards in classrooms and these are used well.

In the weaker lessons there was not enough reference to previous learning and the pupils were reluctant to undertake activities where they could not see the relevance. The bright, cheerful classrooms have a good range of resources and attractive displays which reflect how much the pupils' work is valued.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum continues to be broad and balanced and is enhanced by expertise provided by a partner specialist language college, and music which is taught by the specialist music service. The curriculum is kept under review to ensure its relevance for the pupils. New courses include media studies and applied science. Vocational skills courses are planned to start this term in the newly built vocational centre on site. The recently extended range of accreditation at Key Stage 4 matches the abilities of the pupils well and provides them with good levels of challenge. Skills for working life are also externally accredited. Specific programmes have been introduced to remedy the weaknesses identified in basic skills and the school is working towards achieving the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The current Year 9 pupils are aiming to achieve Entry Level accreditation for basic skills.

After school activities such as basketball, involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and residential experiences all add to the richness of the wider curriculum and encourage the pupils to be more active, develop their independence and take more responsibility for their lives.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment. The high level of staff concern for the pupils' welfare extends throughout the day from when they are greeted on arrival until they are escorted to their transport to go home. Participation in after school activities is encouraged, and where needed transport home is provided so that this is not a barrier to them joining in. The induction programme helps new pupils to settle into school. The pupils appreciate the very good support and guidance they receive from staff throughout their time at the school. The school works closely with other professionals in social and health care to consider the emotional as well as the physical and academic well being of each pupil. There is good communication with parents, who hold the school in high regard.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Despite the turbulence caused by significant staff changes, the headteacher has successfully created a stable and improving environment. There is a good climate for learning and a shared focus on raising standards and achievement. He fosters positive attitudes, high expectations and good relationships across the school. A calm, purposeful atmosphere permeates the school day. The staff share his vision for creating a 'nurturing' environment which develops the whole child and plans are underway for turning this into practice. As part of a whole school approach to teaching and learning, there is a drive to achieve consistency in assessment of pupils' needs and progress. This is beginning to provide senior managers and co-ordinators with information to support their planning and curriculum development.

The pleasant school environment is maintained to a high standard. The headteacher has ensured that the school is well resourced and has a good range of specialist accommodation and expertise in most subject areas. Good use is made of off-site facilities such as the local leisure centre. Appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard the pupils, although staff training in child protection is too limited.

The headteacher and staff have a broad view of the school's strengths and know the areas they wish to develop. The staffing structure has been reviewed and revised roles and responsibilities are being clarified. However, the school does not have a strategic approach to evaluating its work and establishing priorities and plans for improvement. It is unclear how the responsibilities of senior staff are intended to align with future developments. The school is not evaluating its own performance well enough.

The governors use their expertise and experience to provide good support for the school. They have a good understanding of the difficulties it has come through and are very aware of the need to now develop a more strategic view of the future. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	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>	3	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	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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 welcoming me to your school earlier this week and giving your time to tell me about your school.

These are the main findings from the inspection:

- Lever Park School cares well for you and encourages you to lead healthy lifestyles.
- I agree with you that the school is a safe place to be and most of you take responsibility for your own safety and that of others around you.
- The staff provide very good support for you throughout the school day.
- There have been improvements in the courses and examinations, which you can take and I know you are looking forward to the skills you will be able to develop when the new vocational centre opens in November.
- Many of you achieve well in your time at the school, particularly those of you whose attendance is good. You have been particularly successful in passing GCSE and Entry Level examinations a year early, and with good grades. Congratulations. Attendance across the school could be higher and I would encourage you to try to meet your personal target.
- Your behaviour around school is generally good and most of you are keen to learn and do your best.
- The headteacher manages the school well day to day and you appreciate that he and the staff listen to your views.

These are the main points, which the school should improve:

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is good and captures your interest.
- Help you to improve your literacy skills so that you can use them well in all subjects.
- Check on what is working well in the school and what are the main things, which need to be better and draw up a plan to achieve this.

Once again, thank you for your support with this inspection. You and your staff can be proud of what you have achieved and I wish you every success for the future.