



The Phoenix School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134227
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 282500
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 21 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Alan Lemon LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Great North Road
School category	Community		NG31 7UF
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01476 574112
Number on roll	65	Fax number	01476 579307
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr.Graham Wheat
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. William Bush

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 21 March 2006 - 21 March 2006	Inspection number 282500
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2003. All the pupils who attend this special school come from White British backgrounds. There are just three girls on roll. Pupils' backgrounds are varied, although most experience some extent of social and economic deprivation. They all have Statements of Special Educational Needs relating to emotional and behavioural difficulties. On entry to the school, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are well below average. The school provides pupils with extra activities in its extended day from Monday to Thursday each school week between 3.30pm and 7pm. It also supports other groups of pupils. The outreach service provides education for pupils not attending a school, with the aim of re-engaging them in education on a full time basis at the school. It also has a small programme of education for pupils who are on the waiting list to join the school. An alternative curriculum is offered to pupils who are seriously disaffected. The school has a partnership with Grantham College through which pupils have access to a range of vocational courses.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's effectiveness is good and it gives good value for money. Its own evaluation of being a good school is an accurate one, and the procedures for self-evaluation are satisfactory. Leadership and management are good, a result of which has been the establishment of high expectations and the effective provision to meet pupils' needs. The new accommodation is of high quality and has been made very attractive. The school knows the value of its achievements so far and knows equally what still needs to be done. It has a strong capacity for further improvement. The care and support of pupils are good. Staff are adept in dealing positively with pupils who are difficult to manage. Pupils are all given positive incentives to behave well and their improvement is remarkable. With a history of disrupted education behind them, pupils settle down well and enjoy learning. Educationally, they have much catching up to do but, with the continual encouragement of adults, they are achieving satisfactorily and being prepared well for the future. The very impressive range of learning opportunities and the appealing activities in the evenings are a firm basis for raising standards further. Achievement is satisfactory. However, whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, the good practice found in the fair amount of expert teaching taking place is not yet being spread effectively to all teaching. Equally, pupils' learning is no more than satisfactory. This comes from the limited understanding of pupils' progress through the use of assessment information and its impact on planning appropriately challenging work. The school knows this and is well on the way to improving teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the skills to vigorously analyse the information collected in school on pupils' progress in order to raise their achievement and standards. - Ensure that what is making teaching most effective in pupils' learning is adopted successfully by all teachers so that achievement improves in all subjects and courses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Despite being in the relatively early stages of its development, the school gives all of its pupils a good deal. When they arrive, pupils are greeted with a well-organised and supportive environment into which they settle very well. As a result, pupils quickly begin to make progress. There is no variation in this picture in relation to different groups of pupils, including those who benefit from the school's outreach work. They all progress at a good rate when presented with expert and challenging teaching. Because Year 11 pupils are driven hard by determined English teaching, they produce the coursework they need in order to succeed in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and in the Entry Level Certificate (ELC) course. Some pupils need encouraging in order to meet course expectations, which they accept, but their progress is slower. By the end of Year 11, most are successful in achieving passes in GCSE English, mathematics and art. Pupils also gain passes in the much wider range of ELC

courses as well as in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course. Overall, achievement in their courses is satisfactory. In reaching this point, much has been done by staff to encourage pupils and build their confidence. However, at this stage in the school's development, the depth of understanding of pupils' rates of progress is not extensive enough. Teaching is not benefiting as it should from the analysis of pupils' performance and, therefore, the levels of challenge faced by pupils in learning are not always founded on stretching them appropriately. Hence, pupils' targets are not necessarily as demanding as they should be.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Staff do a great deal to promote pupils' self-esteem, boost their confidence and develop their social and communication skills. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The improvement in pupils' attendance is good, as the school works hard to maintain and increase this. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They quickly develop very positive attitudes and find they enjoy learning. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship, pupils gain a good understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. Good work-experience placements, careers education and partnerships, particularly with the 'Connexions' service, prepare pupils well for leaving school. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community as well as in school, such as through the school council. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is promoted well and pupils are provided with good opportunities to think about things outside their day-to-day lives and to reflect on their behaviour. They develop good social awareness and an effective understanding of the differences between right and wrong. Many opportunities within the subjects and a variety of trips and visitors to the school develop pupils' good appreciation of their own culture. Whilst the school provides some events that promote other cultures, it is limited in actively developing a good understanding of multi-cultural Britain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, with instances of good teaching. As a result of the effective ways the school is managed, much attention and effort go into the planning of lessons. However, although some of the planning makes a difference to pupils' learning, some does not succeed in linking lesson objectives successfully to learning, despite the detail included. Variability in the expertise and experience in teaching are at the heart of this. The school has a mixture of experienced and less experienced teaching taking place. Equally, the use of information from the close tracking of pupils' progress is too restricted and the level of challenge for them is sometimes too haphazard. The best teaching pursues clear learning objectives that are well explained to pupils at the outset. Consequently, pupils quickly grasp the

purpose of the lesson and soon settle to work, enjoying learning. For example, pupils were seen engaging in lively, thoughtful discussions, seeking answers and debating the quality of their work. Occasionally, pupils had opportunities to work independently or with each other, and to use computers to present their writing attractively. On occasions, however, teachers thought, inappropriately, that they needed to be in the driving seat when pupils were learning. In all teaching there is a good rapport between adults and pupils, which gains their co-operation and results in excellent behaviour. There is usually thought given to varying activities to make them interesting. Pupils pinpoint practical work as the most enjoyable and they find science experiments an exciting prospect.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Despite being not long established, the school provides pupils with a very impressive range of learning experiences. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study all of the National Curriculum subjects. All pupils are supported in their personal development by means of a very effective PSHE and citizenship programme. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are prepared very well for their future economic well-being by the flexible curriculum arrangements in place, though religious education is not taught in Year 11. Pupils have good opportunities to work towards a variety of awards, including a wide range of vocational courses, which are provided in school or through highly effective links with the local college. A very well organised work experience programme gives pupils a broad range of occupations to explore. Altogether, the school makes very good provision for pupils' work-related learning. A hugely impressive programme of activities enriches pupils' learning. Visits into the local and wider communities and many visitors into the school contribute to bringing pupils' learning 'alive'. The extended school day is used very well by pupils. This provides clubs and activities, popular with pupils, which enable them to pursue current interests and develop new ones.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the school's well-organised environment, in which the care, guidance and support is good. It operates on a very good understanding of pupils' emotional and behavioural needs. This is shared consistently by all members of staff and leads to stable and positive relationships with pupils. Key workers, tutorial periods and the house system are well geared towards pupils' pastoral care. The procedures to ensure that pupils are protected and kept safe are rigorous. The school has made strong links with parents, support agencies and professionals, through which it co-ordinates effective help for pupils and their families. This includes comprehensive guidance for pupils on the risks they may face and how best to deal with these. This includes sharply focused teaching on the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Pupils also have expert guidance on sex education and relationships. In terms of personal development, a clear and accurate picture is built of how well each pupil is doing. This results in challenging targets for pupils to improve their behaviour. They are closely involved in pursuing

these targets and appreciate the many rewards there are for succeeding. Their self-confidence builds and pupils join in enthusiastically, finding enjoyment in the school's wide range of experiences. The attention given to supporting pupils' progress in subjects and courses is not as highly developed. Attendance is carefully monitored and absence is vigorously tackled. Parents and carers are contacted quickly if pupils fail to arrive in school. The names of pupils who maintain full attendance for the week are displayed on the entrance hall notice board, and their achievement is celebrated in assembly and by the reward of a merit mark.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is benefiting in its development from good leadership. It got off to a good start in September 2003 and has been building effectively on this since then. Despite the fact that leadership is now changing at the senior level, clear direction and high expectations hold firm. The headteacher's clear vision and understanding of the school's priorities ensure that it continues to grow and improve. The capacity for further improvement is good. Governors support the headteacher and the school well. Their strong commitment and influence mean that barriers to the school's success are tackled effectively. Successful ways of working with very challenging pupils are understood thoroughly, which has guided the development of much good and outstanding provision. High quality accommodation and resources complement this considerably. The multitude of colourful displays along corridors and in classrooms underlines the sense of purpose permeating the school. Good teamwork is decisive in managing the successes achieved thus far. Roles are clearly defined and all staff work methodically on their responsibilities. The school's procedures for self-evaluation are satisfactory, and include suitable involvement of its stakeholders. The management of performance, training and improvement planning is being co-ordinated to increasing effect. Much is being done to develop, from within, the expertise the school needs by encouraging staff onto professional courses. Learning support assistants have already qualified as teachers by this route. There is an accurate assessment of the quality of teaching but, as the school knows, it needs to be more active in spreading its best practice. Integral to this is the need for more vigorous analysis of pupils' performance so that teachers are better placed to plan learning opportunities and raise standards.

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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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	3	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	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

We thoroughly enjoyed the day spent with you recently as we inspected your school. We found you all very friendly and we thank you for assisting us in our job. This is what we found out about your school: - Although your school is fairly new, we think it is doing well and is a good school. This is because the headteacher and all of the staff have worked incredibly hard to make it the success it is. - We think the wide range of work and the activities on offer, including those in after school hours, are excellent. Those of you in Years 10 and 11 have very good options for study in school, at college and through work experience. - As a result, we have seen you make progress in your work. Your progress is satisfactory now but we think it can be better. - Your behaviour in school is excellent and this says a great deal about the efforts you and the staff make for this to be so. Even though the school is a good one, there are some things that can be done to make it better and improve the progress you make: - The school needs to keep a closer track of your progress so that it knows better what to do to improve it. - The school should go on working to make all teaching as effective as the best. Once again, many thanks for the pleasant time spent with you.