



Fortuna School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134229
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 282502
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 19 October 2005
Reporting inspector Ms. Sue Aldridge LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Kingsdown Road
School category	Community special		LN6 0FB
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01522 705561
Number on roll	29	Fax number	01522 705563
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. John Rose
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Josephine Richardson

Age group 5 to 11	Inspection dates 19 October 2005 - 19 October 2005	Inspection number 282502
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Fortuna School opened in September 2003. It is the only special school in Lincolnshire for primary aged pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All the pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are currently no girls on roll, and no children in the Foundation Stage. Of the 29 pupils on the roll, almost all are white; a very small number are of mixed race. There are a small number of pupils in public care, and a very small number from travelling families. Pupils come from all over Lincolnshire, and are frequently from families supported by social services. When they enter the school, pupils have often missed schooling and their attainment is well below that expected of pupils nationally. The school's building is owned by a private company, Bovis Lendlease, which employs the caretaker and cleaning staff. School staff are working in partnership with Bovis Lendlease to design and adapt the school environment and facilities to meet the needs of the pupils. Fortuna is located close to a nursery and a mainstream primary school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fortuna is an effective school. Its strong ethos and nurturing environment support pupils well in improving their behaviour. They settle well, improve their attendance and start to make rapid progress. The headteacher provides very good leadership; she has effectively communicated her vision for the school as a nurturing environment, and all staff are strongly committed to this as a way of working. The capacity for improvement is good. Staff are particularly skilled in managing behaviour and the teaching is good. The curriculum is good. Pupils are well cared for and they receive good support from staff and other agencies. Governors are supportive and are beginning to take a strategic role; all but one statutory requirement is met. The school provides good value for money. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. Although the inspection agreed with the school's own assessment of its effectiveness in most areas, it does not give itself enough credit for pupils' achievements or for the quality of leadership and management. The school knows broadly what it does well and what needs to be improved, but the school improvement plan does not extend over a three-year period or contain all the developments planned. The school has not been inspected before, so no judgement is made on improvement since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Decide on the content of a programme for sex and relationships education for pupils.
- Produce a school improvement plan that extends over a three-year period and contains all the priorities for development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils enter the school, many have been excluded from previous placements and have experienced considerable disruption to their schooling. As a result, they attain at very low levels. For instance, when they are assessed on entry, few attain at National Curriculum Level 1 in English, mathematics or science. The school sets challenging targets to raise achievement. In 2004-2005, it aimed for each pupil to progress two P levels or National Curriculum sub-levels in each of English, mathematics, science, and personal and social development. Almost all pupils reached these targets, and a few exceeded them. This represents good progress. The best progress is in mathematics, science and personal and social development. Progress in literacy is satisfactory. Shorter term targets are set in pupils' individual education plans. Pupils make satisfactory progress against these. There are too many for all to be achieved in the timescale, and senior staff are aware of this and plan to review individual education plans. Although pupils do not reach the standards expected of pupils nationally, this is a result of the nature and extent of their learning difficulties and disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

When they enter the school, many pupils are emotionally insecure and find it hard to trust adults. The school's nurturing environment quite soon makes them feel safe and secure. They come to trust adults, and greet them affectionately in the mornings. An assessment of behaviour is made at entry, and this is used well to set individual targets for pupils. Pupils' behaviour improves greatly. Violent outbursts become less frequent, and incidents of physical restraint gradually reduce; it is rare for pupils to abscond. Pupils understand that physical restraint is for their safety and the safety of others; they have a say in the methods used to restrain them too. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through the constructive relationships that pupils have with adults in the school, they develop a greater self-awareness. Frequent praise for small demonstrations of self-control or academic progress promotes pupils' self-esteem. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes towards the school and their work. Many try hard to do well; they present their work neatly and respect displays around the school. Pupils know and accept the school rules. Each one becomes a STAR as he or she learns to Stop, Think, and Act Responsibly. For example, pupils will voluntarily move to a comfy sofa in the classroom when they feel the need to 'chill', thus avoiding an outburst. Pupils readily accept responsibilities such as showing a visitor the way, or representing their peers on the school council. They also contribute ideas for raising funds. They show good, socially acceptable behaviour when they breakfast or lunch together or celebrate one another's birthdays in school. On such occasions, pupils show an awareness of healthy food options. Their awareness of other cultures and customs develops well, and they particularly enjoy tasting different foods from countries such as India or Greece. Pupils' attendance improves significantly, and many take part enthusiastically in activities that form part of the extended day. These include activities that promote physical fitness, such as football training.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are many good features of teaching, but the most telling strengths are the skills that staff display in managing the pupils' behaviour. Not all had these skills when they began work at the school, and they describe a 'very steep learning curve'. Staff value the formal training that they have had in managing pupils with challenging behaviour. Both the headteacher and assistant headteacher have worked alongside staff in the classroom, modelling successful strategies, and this has been most effective in empowering staff. Teamwork in the classroom is highly effective. When there is an outburst, staff move quickly and quietly to intervene. As a result, there is little disruption to the learning of other pupils. Teaching assistants deal effectively with incidents that occur in lessons, allowing teachers to get on with teaching. Assistants make an important contribution to teaching too, when they take groups or individuals for part of lessons. The hard work of staff results in most pupils being engaged well

throughout lessons. Staff give very encouraging feedback to pupils during lessons, rewarding them for good behaviour and work; this motivates pupils well. Staff know pupils well, because pupils needs and abilities are thoroughly assessed when they start at the school. Teachers plan appealing tasks that are well matched to the different abilities of pupils. Tasks present just the right level of challenge, so pupils are stimulated but not frustrated. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and meets nearly all statutory requirements - the only omission is sex education, the policy for which needs to be decided by the governors. It is highly relevant to pupils, with its nurturing features and a suitable emphasis on personal, social and health education (PSHE). The extended day allows pupils to start the day in a 'family' breakfast in the classroom. This provides a good beginning to the day. After school, pupils have opportunities to socialise with one another, explore interests and occupy their leisure time in a safe and well supervised environment. Staff ensure that this provides a good ending to the day. Classes are carefully composed to take account of emotional maturity as well as levels of attainment. Groupings ensure that individual needs are met well. Although they contain mixed year groups, curriculum planning takes due account of this, so all pupils have opportunities to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. The school's provision matches well that outlined on pupils' statements. The curriculum is suitably enriched by a range of visits, visitors and the after school activities. The PSHE programme provides pupils with satisfactory opportunities to learn how to be healthy and stay safe. A great deal of thought and hard work has gone into making the accommodation suitable for these pupils, and there are exciting plans to improve it further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of relationships between staff and pupils forms the cornerstone of this aspect of the school's work. In their interactions with pupils, staff show that they value pupils even though they do not approve of misbehaviour. A good range of clear policies effectively supports the school's work. Rigorous health and safety checks are carried out, and all risks are carefully assessed. There is a risk assessment for each pupil. Child protection procedures are robust and staff are well trained in these matters. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and the school works in a constructive partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils have access to all sources of available support. For instance, some medical professionals visit pupils in school so that time away from the classroom is minimised. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to influence the work of the school, as their ideas for fundraising are sought and the student council has a say in developments. Pupils are involved well in setting targets to improve their behaviour.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

As the school had small beginnings and has grown slowly, much development has had to be undertaken personally by the headteacher. She has successfully established the school, and built around her a very competent and high performing team of committed staff. Productive relationships have been established with parents and the many agencies that support the pupils. Parents are pleased with the provision that the school makes for their children. Now that there is an assistant headteacher without a full-time teaching commitment, leadership is being more widely shared. The assistant headteacher leads well on the curriculum. Subject leaders have been appointed; they have job descriptions, have time for development work, and are well prepared to take on their monitoring and evaluation roles. Governors share the headteacher's vision and commitment to a nurturing school. They have been particularly supportive in liaising with Bovis Lendlease to negotiate changes to the school's accommodation. They meet termly, receive detailed reports from the headteacher, and have started to make visits to the school and become involved in school improvement planning. However, they have not yet drafted the school's sex and relationships education policy, as they are required to do. The school is aware of this and a meeting is planned for this to be addressed. Although there is a large budget surplus, there is a good reason for this. Funds are earmarked for improvements to the accommodation and to support continued resourcing, such as books for the current priority of raising achievement in literacy skills. As a rapidly developing school, the improvement plan has been devised on a yearly basis. As such it has served the purpose of guiding and managing improvement. However, the longer term vision for the school, articulated through policies and other documents, should be reflected in a three-year improvement plan.

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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?	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	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

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?	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	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	3	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	No
Learners are educated about sexual health	No
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	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

I enjoyed my visit to your school yesterday, especially the birthday party. Thank you for making me feel welcome. I came to school to see how you were getting on and whether there are any things that could be done better. The main things that you do well. - You improve your behaviour. - Because of your improved behaviour you make good progress in your learning. - You get on well with the staff. These are the main things that people working in the school do well. - The headteacher has made your school successful in a short time. - The staff are good at teaching you and caring for you. - Staff work well with your parents and other people so that you have the help you need. The main things that could be done better. - Deciding what to teach you about healthy and safe friendships. - Planning for improving the school. I hope that you will keep up the good work.