



Landgate School, Bryn

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134297
LEA Wigan
Inspection number 282539
Inspection dates 1 November 2005 to 2 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ms Caroline Broomhead HMI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Landgate Lane
School category	Community special		Ashton-in-Makerfield
Age range of pupils	4 to 14		Wigan WN4 0EP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 718851
Number on roll	0	Fax number	01942 718851
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Alderman Millington
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr Martin Hanbury

Age group 4 to 14	Inspection dates 1 November 2005 - 2 November 2005	Inspection number 282539
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Landgate School, Bryn opened in September 2003 as a new 24-place special school for pupils from the Borough of Wigan aged 4 to 16 years who have autism or severe communication difficulties. This is their first inspection report. There are 22 pupils on roll, most of whom are of primary age. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and the majority have additional learning difficulties, medical needs and exhibit behaviour which challenges. The pupils' attainment falls within the range of National Curriculum levels P1 to P8, with a small number of more able pupils working within level 1. A quarter of pupils are entitled to free school meals. All pupils are white British and there are none for whom English is a second language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Landgate is a good school which cares well for its pupils. It has made good progress since opening two years ago in establishing itself as a valuable specialist provision within the Borough. As a result of the good teaching, the pupils in the Foundation Stage and throughout the school make good progress in their learning and personal development in relation to their abilities and difficulties. The pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. Team teaching is a real strength in this school. The headteacher provides outstanding direction for the school and has established a culture of regular and honest self review. As a result all staff have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The detailed school development plan is usefully guiding the school in achieving its objectives, but it does not make clear the expected improvement in pupils' learning and achievement. The curriculum is satisfactory and plans to improve it are being introduced. However, resources are limited, and some are not relevant for the ages of the older pupils. Provision to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness are limited. Partnership with other professionals and agencies is excellent. The school works closely with parents and they value the good care and support given to families. Governors are supportive of the school but have yet to fully develop their role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of its provision. The school is very well placed to achieve its goals. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the curriculum so that it:
 - is well resourced for all age groups
 - reflects the interests and abilities of older pupils and offers them opportunity to achieve external accreditation for their achievements
 - provides planned opportunities for the pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness.
- Ensure that the school's plans for development are clearly focussed on improving pupils' learning and achievements.
- Develop the role of the governing body so that it plays its full part in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils enter school with prior attainment which is well below that expected of the majority of pupils nationally. All pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, make

at least good progress in their social and communication skills and parents are complimentary about the success the school has in helping their children to achieve so well in these areas. The pupils confidently use symbols to help them to respond to requests or to make their wishes known. They learn that this also helps them to structure their day and know what is expected of them, so reducing their anxiety. Consistency in approach by all staff and other professionals is at the heart of this success. Progress is carefully tracked in all subjects and staff are constantly seeking to move pupils on to the next level of challenge. The school rightly judges that pupils are making good, steady progress relevant to their starting points and abilities. Their attainment is mainly within the P levels of the National Curriculum, with a small number of pupils working within Level 1, particularly in reading and aspects of mathematics. More planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all subject areas would promote achievement even further.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The smiles and giggles show how much the pupils enjoy coming to school. They develop trusting relationships with adults and in this safe environment usually willingly take part in activities. Their attendance is excellent. Behaviour around school is good. Most pupils experience difficulty in managing their own behaviour and can become anxious or distressed. The calm, professional and consistent approaches used by staff help the pupils to feel secure and remain calm and as a result they can focus their attention on learning. The pupils are learning to distinguish right from wrong. Through carefully structured teaching programmes, they are learning to play together, to socialise with adults, and to tolerate each other's presence and individual mannerisms. At lunchtimes pupils eat together in class groups with their staff and learn to be more independent and choose healthy meals. Although pupils have some opportunities to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness, for example through celebrations of Christmas and Divali, this aspect of the school's provision is underdeveloped. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the challenges presented to them during the residential holiday in the summer. Through visits to local shops, cafes and other places of interest the pupils begin to develop their confidence and understanding about life in the local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The inspection confirmed that teaching and learning are good. In the Reception class they are very good. Good relationships and consistent approaches to communication and behaviour create a good climate for learning in which pupils feel safe to undertake activities. Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' social interaction, to enable them to make choices and to develop their independence. Team teaching is a strength of the school. Teachers, teaching assistants, and speech and language therapists work in harmony to plan activities which engage pupils' interest, focus on their individual

learning objectives and promote continuity in learning. Adults use a range of very effective approaches to support pupils' learning, including demonstrating activities, for example in physical education. In the classrooms, flexibility ensures that distractions are minimised and a calm environment is maintained. Pupils warm to the praise which they receive when they have completed a task, followed an instruction or used their initiative. Where teaching is less effective, the purpose and relevance of activities is not clear and does not therefore engage the pupils' interest. Some of the resources used for teaching older pupils, whilst being at the right developmental level, do not reflect the pupils' age and interest level. Resources to support teaching and learning are too limited, except in the Foundation Stage where they are good.

Teachers use the findings from extensive initial assessments and careful tracking of progress to support their planning. Parents are closely involved in their child's learning and are pleased with the regular contacts with school and reports which they receive about progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and good plans are underway to improve it further. Emphasis is rightly placed on developing the pupils' personal, social and communication skills in all areas of school life. For example, lunch and break times are planned in as much detail as lessons. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and physical education is a core activity for all pupils. Sex education is taught sensitively as part of the personal, social and health education programme and on an individual basis in conjunction with families. Whilst provision for developing literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, opportunities are missed to develop these skills across all subjects. 19 out of the 22 pupils in the school are of primary age. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum for older pupils is not fully developed and there are no opportunities for external accreditation. There is also a lack of specialist facilities for them. Some classrooms are small and restrict flexibility. The school makes good use of community facilities to support the curriculum, for example the local swimming pool.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a high standard of care for its pupils. Rigorous procedures are in place to secure pupils' safety and promote their well-being and parents are confident that their children are well looked after throughout the day. The pupils are closely supervised at all times. Support for pupils is excellent. Many of the pupils become anxious at times of change, and staff take considerable care to ensure that they are well prepared for moving on to new classes or new activities. The staff 'go the extra mile', sometimes literally. For example, they will work with families in the home to support pupils who may be reluctant to get ready for school.

Transition reviews take place at the end of Year 9 and the Connexions service has recently become involved in providing guidance for older pupils, although options for where pupils will go on leaving the school are unclear.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and clear direction. His collaborative approach has engaged the commitment of all staff and they enthusiastically share his high expectations.

Professional development for all staff is given high priority and is central to the detailed plans for school improvement. Through the regular cycle of self review, all staff have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and know what they have to do to bring about improvements. However, criteria for success do not indicate what the expected impact will be on pupils' learning and achievements. Planning is well underway for curriculum co-ordinators to develop their expertise, to monitor their subjects, and to draw up curriculum development plans. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly and is closely linked to performance management. The rigorous procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. Parents speak highly of how well their children are cared for.

The school embraces the expertise, advice and support of others outside school in its pursuit of providing high quality education for its pupils. The speech and language therapist is part of the school team and makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress and development.

The governors are supportive of the school and have a vision for its developing as a centre of excellence. However, their role in monitoring and evaluating the school's improvement is under-developed. The school provides good value for money and has very good capacity to improve.

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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	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	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	3	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	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?	3	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	1	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	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	Yes
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

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:

- the school cares for you very well and helps you to get better at looking after yourselves. Your parents are pleased with the support you receive
- you are making good progress at school, particularly in how well you use your symbols to let people know what you want or what you are thinking
- the teaching is good. All the staff and the speech therapist work closely together to plan interesting activities for you which help you to learn and enjoy school
- there are not enough resources and, for those of you who are older, they are not always as interesting as they could be
- the headteacher is leading the school very well and the staff know what is working well and what they need to do to make things even better
- the governors support the school and want it to be very good.

These are the improvements which are needed at your school:

- make sure that the school's plans show how the staff are expecting you to achieve even better
- the governors should get more involved in checking how well the school is improving
- improve the resources
- help you to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects
- give you more opportunities to learn about yourselves and the lives and cultures of other people.

You and your staff can be proud of what you have achieved and I wish you every success for the future.