



Stubbin Wood School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113036
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 285550
Inspection dates 4 May 2006 to 5 May 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	Burlington Avenue
School category	Community		NG20 9AD
Age range of pupils	3 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01623742795
Number on roll	131	Fax number	01623742122
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Andy Brickles
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. Lee Floyd

Age group 3 to 16	Inspection dates 4 May 2006 - 5 May 2006	Inspection number 285550
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school caters traditionally for boys and girls with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). At present, the largest group remains those with MLD but greater numbers of pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) are being admitted. These now represent a significant proportion of all pupils. A few pupils have, in addition, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). When they start school, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding is well below the level expected for their age. The school has a community nursery with 32 children on roll, most of whom will go on to local primary schools. About a third of the children who have learning difficulties stay in the special school. Nursery provision has been redeveloped with extensive building refurbishment as a Children's Centre. This has just been launched and provides adult training, parenting support and child care facilities. Pupils live in an area of Derbyshire that has some social and economic disadvantage. Most come from White British backgrounds. The school's aim is to challenge the circumstances faced by pupils, their families and the community it serves. At the time of the last inspection the school was found to have serious weaknesses in leadership and management and in the quality of education provided.

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 judged to be good and this is in line with the school's own evaluation of its overall effectiveness. An outstanding feature is that all pupils thoroughly enjoy school. The school cares for and supports all pupils well with the result that their personal development is good. The value for money provided is good. The school has responded well to the increasingly more complex range of pupils' learning difficulties. Significant investment in recruiting and training staff and success in adapting the curriculum is providing all pupils, including those with SLD, PMLD and ASD, with a good quality of education. Provision for the Foundation Stage in the nursery is good. Teaching and learning here are effective and all children achieve well. In the rest of the school pupils all achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning. By the end of Year 11, in examinations, pupils often gain the highest grades. Pupils' progress is closely tracked and analysed by teachers and this gives the school a reliable measure of its effectiveness. While a considerable amount of additional monitoring and evaluation is undertaken, particularly on the quality of teaching, the role so far played by subject leaders has been too limited. They are not sufficiently involved in determining the quality of provision in their subjects or in contributing to setting whole-school targets for pupils' performance. Both shortcomings are limiting the school in its ability to judge its own performance as rigorously as it could and accurately identify specific areas for further improvement. Nevertheless, as a result of good leadership and management, a determined drive has eliminated the serious weaknesses found at the time of the last inspection. As a result, morale in school is high and standards have risen. Both parents and pupils express very positive opinions. The school is vigorously pursuing ambitious aims and has expanded its role in good partnerships with schools and by development of the new Children's Centre. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- To raise achievement further by ensuring that robust monitoring and evaluation is done by subject leaders. - Outcomes of all monitoring and evaluation activity are used effectively to inform whole-school development planning; particularly in relation to setting targets for pupils' performance by the end of Years 6, 9 and 11.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils throughout the school are achieving well and there is no significant variation between groups, particularly for pupils with more complex learning difficulties. Pupils have challenging individual targets to work towards that support their progress. Targets are determined by a thorough classroom assessment of what each pupil knows, understands and can do. In 2005, pupils in Year 6, 9 and 11 achieved or exceeded most of the targets set for them in English, mathematics and science. Children in the nursery achieve well because of good quality Foundation Stage provision. Here, teaching has

a sharp focus on children's needs, which are clearly understood as a result of the very effective assessments made. Most children reach or are near the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage in each area of learning. A minority, who have learning difficulties, while unable to reach these standards, nevertheless progress well. Children get wide ranging and expert support in the nursery, leading to effective personal development which contributes significantly to the good progress they all make. In the rest of the school good quality teaching, based on thorough assessment, ensures pupils learn well and make good progress at all stages. The close attention given to developing resources and approaches to teaching pupils with SLD, PMLD and ASD has ensured these pupils achieve well. New developments in place to support communication mean pupils with SLD or PMLD use signs, symbols and electronic communication aids effectively. Overall, all pupils' achievements in literacy, numeracy and science are good. There is also good achievement, in particular, in art, resistant material technology and food technology as a result of well planned courses and expert teaching. The good use made of information and communication technology (ICT) means pupils are adept with computers and other technology. By the end of Year 11, MLD pupils achieve well in examination courses. In the Entry Level Certificate, the great majority attain the highest grade in mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology. Grades in English are good, although not as high as in the other subjects, which reflect pupils' greater difficulties in applying literacy skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their personal development through effective provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their delight in the school and love of learning leads pupils to comment 'we wouldn't change it at all' and makes them want to 'try our best.' Spontaneously bursting into a rendition of a French song, accompanied with Gallic shrugs, pupils demonstrated huge confidence in performing together and the pleasure they take in public performance. Pupils have a good understanding of being healthy and the importance of healthy eating, although occasionally being given sweets for treats is not a positive encouragement. Sport and exercise are important to them and a good number gain the Junior Sports Leader Award. Attendance is good overall and the school works hard to press and encourage pupils who do not attend regularly. The school council is highly motivated and effective in bringing about changes, for example, making 'friendship stops' for pupils who feel vulnerable. Pupils' behaviour is good and the challenging behaviour which occurs because of some pupils' difficulties is managed well. Pupils' good literacy, numeracy and computer skills and the effective way they work together ensure they have the skills they will need in later life. The opportunity to create progress files of their achievements and write their curriculum vitae in electronic format on a computer is a strong contribution to their preparations for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning throughout the school is good. Pupils arrive to lessons interested and confident learners. This is because teachers and their assistants take a great deal of interest in them and support them well. The staff have a good knowledge of pupils' needs and, with the strong rapport that exists, pupils are managed effectively and behave well. The assessment of pupils' learning needs is thorough and this information is being used well in setting each pupil individual targets to work towards in lessons. The intentions for lessons are set out in detail, providing a good range of activities that match pupils' different capabilities. This ensures they are all challenged effectively and make good progress towards their individual targets. The pace of learning is skilfully adjusted to a rate best suited to each pupil. They have good encouragement to be independent learners and pupils happily help each other. The activities and resources teachers decide upon are well chosen to capture pupils' interest, with the result that pupils stay extremely well engaged in learning and they all thoroughly enjoy their work. The opportunities for pupils to use ICT, such as the Internet, word processing and digital photography, serves well to enliven learning and extend skills. Staff are coping well with the demands made by educating SLD, PMLD and ASD pupils. In general, teachers and their assistants have a good range of expertise in the subjects taught. This is strong in literacy, numeracy and science, but also in several other subjects, in particular, art and design and design and technology. Nevertheless, there are instances when the skill with which subjects are taught is insufficient. This is not being detected readily because there are insufficient checks through subject leadership on how well subjects are taught.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Work on pupils' communication skills, their literacy and numeracy are firmly placed at the heart of the curriculum in the nursery and across the rest of the school. This builds effectively the skills pupils will need in later life and sees the school doing well in meeting its aim of 'education for a better life'. Furthermore, work to improve pupils' social skills and self-esteem succeeds through the good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship. The planning of work and activities for SLD and PMLD pupils is developing and being put into place effectively. Resources for learning are continually being expanded. The use of the new sensory and soft play rooms and splash pool creates interesting and exciting activities that engage SLD and PMLD pupils and motivate learning. Similarly, for pupils across the school the many trips out of school, and residential experiences which now go as far as France, broaden pupils' experiences and understanding. Work related learning is well supported with college courses and through work experience. This is demonstrated in the expansion of a range of suitable accreditation that validates pupils' achievements.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support, which ensure pupils work in a positive and safe environment. Health and safety procedures are secure and regularly reviewed. Arrangements for child protection are led and managed well by the school nurse. The nurse's key role in pupils' health education and oversight of their well-being is developing well as are the partnerships with health professionals and other agencies in meeting the needs of each pupil. Staff have built trusting relationships with pupils, who are confident to turn to them for help. Parents are complimentary about the care and support that the school offers, saying 'they help in any way they can' and 'they provide the highest standards of care.' Pupils' pastoral support plans are detailed and monitored regularly, which ensures pupils have the support to help them learn. Their progress is assessed thoroughly and pupils' individual targets well matched to their needs and interests. The school's targets for Years 6, 9 and 11 are in some instances less reliable in helping pupils to reach higher standards. Induction and assessment arrangements in the nursery are well organised. For example, children have their lunch with the other pupils to help smooth the way into school. For older pupils, careers education and guidance provide them with good guidance and support in readiness for leaving school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's aim of 'education for a better life' is being realised effectively through good leadership and management. There is a clear vision on how the school should meet the needs of pupils and contribute to the community. As a result, pupils are gaining good opportunities for a successful start to their adult lives. The headteacher's high expectations for improving the school's effectiveness set a clear direction, which the staff and governors have fully supported. This has eliminated the serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Further improvement is being driven effectively by detailed development planning and actions in which staff, governors, parents and pupils are actively involved. Much is being accomplished and this has raised achievement. Together with the success being found in extending provision for SLD and PMLD pupils and establishing one centre for a breadth of services for children and families, the school has demonstrated a good capacity for improvement. The school's progress is based securely on much rigorous monitoring and evaluation, which is giving a good indication of overall strengths and weaknesses. However, the extent of monitoring by subject leaders is not now sufficient for a really in-depth interrogation of the strengths and weaknesses in all subjects. This is beginning to hinder the school in its efforts to raise achievement even further. A strong feature of the school's monitoring process is the teacher's tracking of individual pupils' performance. This is being continually refined and the school is developing an increasingly clear understanding of what constitutes good rates of progress. In contrast to this positive picture is that the information accrued on individual pupil performance is not always synthesised and analysed in sufficient detail to identify strengths, weaknesses and

appropriately challenging areas for whole-school development. For example, some whole-school targets which have not been soundly based on pupils' capabilities have been over-ambitious and when they have not been met give the impression that some groups of pupils under-achieve. This distortion is beginning to limit the school in its ability to take the next steps needed in its quest 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?	2	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	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?	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	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 two days we spent with you recently. All of you have been very friendly and helpful to us and we thank you for assisting us in doing our job. We left most impressed by how sensible and mature you all are and especially by how much you all enjoy school. This is what we found out about your school: - We were really pleased to find that the staff work very hard and have made your school a good school. - All of the staff looked after you well, which helps to make school such an enjoyable experience for you. - You are all learning well and making good progress in your lessons as well as in becoming independent and responsible young people. - This is because teachers and their classroom assistants are good at ensuring you work hard and get the best from lessons and the many other activities the school provides for you. Even though the school is good, there are two things we have asked the school to do to make it even better: - Allow the teachers who are in charge of each subject to check carefully that you are learning as well as you can in every subject. - Take slightly more care that the targets the school sets for the amount of progress you should make by the end of Years 6, 9 and 11 are ones which, with some hard work, you can achieve.