

Lindsworth School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103632
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286712
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Skurr
Headteacher	Frank Kelley
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Monyhull Hall Road Kings Norton Birmingham B30 3QA
Telephone number	0121 6935363
Fax number	0121 6935369

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most live in the City of Birmingham, but there are eight pupils who come from Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The school is on two sites. The south site provides places for pupils in Years 7 to 11, including the 13 girls, and residential care for 69 pupils. The north site provides 42 day places for pupils in Years 10 to 11, most of whom have been out of full-time education for some considerable time. Around 37% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below that found nationally. The school has recently achieved Investors in People status. There has been an acting headteacher since September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and make good progress. Standards are broadly average, although many pupils have weak literacy and numeracy skills. Results are improving in the national tests at Year 9, and older pupils achieve well in GCSE and courses preparing them for college or work. Pupils' personal development is good. They work hard, and nearly all enjoy school. While attendance is below average, nearly all pupils attend for a far greater time than they did at their previous schools. They generally get on well with one another and form strong friendships with pupils from all ethnic groups.

Pupils are proud of their school and are justified in seeing the good teaching as an important reason for their success. Teachers make learning interesting and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. This means that pupils learn quickly and make the most of their time in lessons. Occasionally, however, teachers plan work that is either too hard or too easy because they are unsure of pupils' levels of attainment. The leaders recognise this and are putting in place new systems that assess pupils' attainment and progress more effectively.

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher has held the school together well during the previous headteacher's absence and created a very good team spirit. The leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement and work purposefully to improve the school. Pupils enjoy the good, well planned curriculum that enables them to achieve well while helping them to learn about staying safe and keeping healthy. They take part enthusiastically in the well organised activities after school, particularly those involving sport. Parents think highly of the school and appreciate the good quality of the care, support and guidance that gives their children the chance to flourish. However, weaknesses in assessment limit the effectiveness of academic guidance given to pupils. Typical of parents' views are comments such as, 'The school has turned my son around' and, 'Lindsworth School has been my son's lifeline to the future.'

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The boarding provision is good. There are very good links between care staff and the rest of the school that ensure that pupils are well cared for at all times. The latest Commission for Social Care Inspection report was very favourable and confirmed that national minimum standards were met including compliance with all requirements relating to pupils' health and safety. Action points from the report have been addressed fully. The accommodation is adequate, but the school recognises the need for refurbishment to make it more comfortable and attractive. Resident pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting activities after school and value their time here. They appreciate the support from skilled staff, who have good links with teaching staff, and make pupils feel valued and able to manage their own behaviour more effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make full use of more effective assessment systems in planning to meet individual needs.
- Improve academic guidance given to pupils by ensuring they know how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, and the tracking of their achievements over time shows that they make good progress. Standards are broadly average, although many pupils struggle with basic reading and writing skills. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do well, particularly in mathematics, science, geography and physical education. National test results are improving, and those in 2006 showed a significant improvement on those of previous years. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make good progress in courses leading to external examinations. For example, in the Oxford and Cambridge and RSA examinations last year, 14 out of 27 pupils gained distinctions in mathematics and 6 out of 10 did so in history. In English, their writing shows significant improvement because they are given tasks such as writing job applications and letters of complaint that interest them. They achieve well in GCSE media studies and produce some exciting work when they write screenplays and devise plots for a play. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress, but sometimes struggle when the teacher pitches the work at too high a level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils appreciate time spent at Lindsworth because they trust the staff and say, 'If we've got any problems, they help us.' Behaviour is satisfactory, but while most pupils behave very well, there is a significant minority who find it hard to keep to the rules and are excluded for short periods. Pupils feel well prepared for the future because they make good progress in basic reading, writing and information and communication technology skills. They take full advantage of college placements and work experience opportunities and particularly enjoy the car maintenance classes. Attendance is satisfactory, and almost always better than at pupils' previous schools. However, despite the school's considerable efforts a few pupils' attendance is poor. Pupils generally feel safe at school and enjoy their lessons. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils discuss sensitive issues confidently and reflect on messages such as 'reap what you sow' in the excellent assemblies. They contribute well to their community by involvement in many local arts and charitable projects. They have a good awareness of the need to live healthy lives and enjoy the many physical activities that improve their fitness. Residential pupils enjoy the many activities planned for them in the evenings.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching and learning explains why pupils make such good progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and they generally respond well by trying hard to succeed. They manage pupils' behaviour well using their thorough knowledge of pupils' difficulties. When pupils do behave poorly, teachers react in a calm, measured way and are very skilled at getting them to control their own behaviour. Teachers use pupils' 'contracts' very effectively to remind them of the school's expectations of their behaviour and pupils respond well to these. Teachers work hard at making lessons interesting so that pupils enjoy learning. For example, they use large computer screens (interactive whiteboards) to illustrate much of the work and pupils find these fascinating. Planning takes account of the wide range of abilities in each class although limitations in the accuracy of assessment mean that work is not always

sufficiently well matched to individual needs. This sometimes means that more able pupils find the work too easy while others struggle to understand what to do. Assessment varies in quality from one subject to another. In some instances pupils are well informed about what they need to do to move to the next stage and this helps them make good progress. In other cases there is, for example in marking of work, too much emphasis on congratulatory comments.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their academic and life skills. There is a good focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills with well focused additional help available for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The curricular planning is satisfactory but varies in quality from subject to subject, and this sometimes makes it difficult for temporary teachers to provide the right work. The school's good provision for vocational education that includes bricklaying, woodwork, painting, catering and decorating prepares pupils well for the world of work. The school makes effective use of the strong links with local primary schools to provide activities such as kite flying, dance and film-making as well as sharing food grown on local allotments. The provision of after-school clubs is good, and pupils enjoy a wide choice of challenging physical activities that contribute well to their fitness. There is good provision for personal, social and health education. Teaching and care staff work very closely together to help pupils understand how to manage their behaviour and discuss issues to do with relationships and feelings. Pupils are well prepared for the future through college 'taster' courses, careers advice and work experience placements.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The stable, dedicated staff ensure that day and residential pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Staff know the pupils 'as well as our own children,' and treat them with dignity and respect, even when they are behaving badly. Adults manage pupils' behaviour consistently and ensure that rewards and sanctions are applied fairly. Pupils appreciate this and respond well. Rigorous strategies are in place to improve attendance, and these work well for most pupils. Links with parents, carers and other professionals are very good and ensure that pupils and their parents have access to a wide range of specialist services. The school's full-time nurse and child and family therapist play an important part in the care and support of pupils. Bullying is taken very seriously with good support for victims and clear contracts for those who bully. Child protection and health and safety systems are robust, and the recent inspection of the residential setting was positive. Targets for improvement in behaviour are good, and work well, but academic target setting lacks consistency and means that pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher has done well this year. He has led the staff purposefully with a good focus on raising standards of attainment and behaviour. He is supported well by other senior staff who share his high expectations of the school. Self-evaluation systems are good, and underpinned by rigorous lesson observations and clear guidance on how teachers can improve their teaching. However, the weaknesses in assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress

limit the effectiveness of planning to meet individual needs and academic guidance. The school made the good decision to appoint a senior member of staff to manage the data on pupils' progress and advise teachers on making better use of data, and this is already improving. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the measures to improve attendance and in the range of courses available for pupils. It is well placed to improve further. Governance is satisfactory. Governors work closely with the staff and know their school well. They recognise the need for further training to enable them to challenge the school more rigorously, particularly in terms of pupils' standards.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Lindsworth School, Kings Norton, Birmingham B30 3QA

Thank you for your important contributions to this inspection. You all made the inspectors very welcome, and those who were kind enough to speak to us told us a lot about your school. We enjoyed being with you in lessons and assemblies.

What we found out about your school

You make good progress. Your work is roughly the same standard as found in most schools, and some of the work you do in physical education, media studies and technology is impressive. The models of canal boats made by the older pupils are stunning. Your behaviour is satisfactory, although some of you find it hard to remember the rules. You make good friends and show respect for each other. It is clear in lessons that you mostly enjoy school, but not all of you attend well enough, and this means that some of you fall behind in your work.

Your teachers are doing a good job. They make lessons interesting and help you learn quickly. The activities planned for you are a good balance between subjects such as English, mathematics and science, and work to help you to learn about how to stay safe and live healthy lives. Adults in the school take good care of you and help you make the right choices in your lives.

Your headteacher and other leaders run the school satisfactorily. They know what needs to be improved and how it can be done. This is why your school is getting better all the time.

What we want the school to do now:

- Teachers need to check on your progress more carefully so that they can make the work you do more suited to each one of you.
- You need to know more clearly how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston (Lead inspector)