



Tiverton School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103763
Local Authority Coventry
Inspection number 286748
Inspection date 31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Alan Dobbins

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Rowington Close
School category	Maintained		Coundon
Age range of pupils	3-11		Coventry CV6 1PS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	024 76594954
Number on roll (school)	36	Fax number	024 76591575
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	A Edwards
		Headteacher	A Chave
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school, which serves the city of Coventry, provides for pupils with severe, and profound and multiple, learning difficulties, although an increasing number have complex difficulties associated with autism. All pupils have statements of special educational needs most are boys and about one third of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. The headteacher is seconded to the local authority for three days each week.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Tiverton School is a good school that provides pupils with a good education. Leadership and management are good and the headteacher is well served by a strong team of senior leaders and the good support of governors. Together they preside over a school in which pupils feel safe and happy and are comfortable as learners.

The relationships between pupils and staff are outstanding and staff take great care of the pupils. Pupils gain good advice and guidance and flourish as young people, and their parents and carers are thrilled by this. They rightly recognise the good progress their children are making in their personal and social development and in becoming as independent as possible. One said that her son 'is happy at school and this is why he is doing so well'. Another said of her son that she could not believe 'how well he has come on since joining the school'. Pupils show that they enjoy school by attending regularly, behaving well and by working hard in most of their lessons. The standards they attain are well below average because of their difficulties with learning. However, good quality teaching helps them achieve well and make good progress at the Foundation Stage. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are also taught well. They achieve well and make good progress over a good curriculum that provides many opportunities to learn what is right for them.

Staff know their pupils well, but information on progress is not recorded consistently across the school. In the best lessons, assessment data are used well in focusing on individual achievement, but this is not happening in all the lessons. In some lessons, teaching is not fine-tuned enough to what each individual needs to know next, so learning is slower. Senior leaders have a sound grasp of the school's strength and weaknesses. The good improvement seen since the last inspection shows the capacity for continuing to improve the school is good. However, strategic planning for improvement is not as sharp as it might be because senior leaders are not making full use of data to identify the priority areas for development or to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that information on pupils' progress is recorded in enough detail to be useful in planning lessons.
- Make more use of that information gathered so that pupils' needs are better met, identify priorities for development and evaluate how well the school is doing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well below average but achievement is good. As yet, pupils' detailed records of progress do not extend over all the years of the school. However, the progress pupils make against their targets, from Year 2 to Year 6, compares favourably with emerging national data for equivalent pupils. Children in the Foundation Stage

are prepared well for their work at Year 1, as is shown by the good progress they make in each of the early learning areas. This good progress continues over Years 1 to 6. There is no evidence to show that any one group of pupils, for example those with complex learning difficulties or those learning English as an additional language, achieve differently from the other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. The outstanding relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils trust and respect staff and they quickly let them know if they are troubled or need support. Parents know their children are happy, comfortable and safe at school and are making good progress in becoming as independent as possible. They are quick to say that this is 'because staff care for the children so well'. Attendance and behaviour are good. A few pupils do have difficulty in always controlling their behaviour, but the school ensures they know what is expected of them.

The pupils' good personal and social skills are very well developed through the outstanding links with other schools. The pupils make a contribution to the wider community when they host pupils from other schools at Tiverton, or through their contribution to the annual mayor making ceremony. They learn of the benefits of being active from the frequent opportunities they have to take part in hydrotherapy, swimming and soft play sessions and in the lessons in physical education. Lessons in literacy and numeracy provide an awareness of simple economic issues, such as the need to pay for items before they can be taken from the shop.

Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils quickly learn to recognise what pleases staff and what is not good and they are aware that being kind and considerate to others is an important part of growing up. They have good knowledge of the lives and beliefs of others because of the ethnic diversity seen throughout the school and through visits by the school to many different churches, temples and mosques of different faiths.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and routinely work hard to please the staff; most of the time, they are comfortable as learners. The small class sizes and the generous number of teaching assistants mean that staff are able to attend to pupils' needs quickly and effectively. In some lessons, when pupils are troubled or very tired because of fragile health, learning usually proceeds as planned because staff are very good at dealing with changing situations.

Teachers, and especially those who have qualified through training at the school, are supported well. They, and their assistants, have had good opportunities to gain the skills required for using a variety of additional communication strategies and specialist approaches, such as the treatment and education of communicatively challenged children (TEACCH). They sign, use symbols and picture exchanges seemingly automatically in ensuring that all pupils, including those whose first language is not English, have equivalent access to their learning. In this, they are helped by a good range of appropriate resources and by the ready availability of computers and interactive whiteboards, much more so than at the time of the last inspection.

Teachers know their pupils well and most of the time plan lessons in which they learn what is right for them. However, across the subjects, there is limited data recording precisely what pupils know and can do. As a result, work provided is not always fully personalised because new learning is not solidly based on prior understanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage provides them with a good range of appropriate learning experiences in each early learning area. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 also cover a good curriculum that broadly matches with national subject requirements and is appropriately adapted to meet their special needs. In literacy and numeracy, leaders rightly recognise the need to sharpen planning to take more account in the lessons of the recommendations of the national strategies.

The curriculum is most effective in promoting pupils' personal and social development and in helping them to be as independent as is possible. In this, it is made relevant through the many opportunities pupils have to take part in learning experiences outside of the classrooms. They choose from football, dance, music and the gardening lunchtime clubs and some join with mainstream pupils to take part in the after school clubs in their schools. Pupils also regularly visit mainstream schools to take part in joint lessons, for example in physical education, and in joint productions at Christmas time, and they host pupils from mainstream and other special schools at Tiverton. They regularly visit the shops, library and other facilities in the local community, such as the city farm, and take part in residential visits to Wales and Northampton. In all these situations, but especially when they are with pupils in mainstream and other special schools, they gain great benefit by being able to practise their emerging social skills and the skills of independence when they do new things in new situations. Visitors to the school, including those from different cultures and beliefs, and those who present creative workshops on many topics, add richness and colour to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Many parents feel that the way their children are cared for and looked after is the best part of the school. Care is excellent. The procedures for child protection are robust. All required checks are made and risk assessments for lessons, visits off site and for individual pupils are rigorously carried out and adhered to.

Support is good. Statutory requirements that relate to statements of special educational need are met with the very effective support of specialists from the many agencies and services that deal with pupils' additional needs. Because of their outstanding relationships with staff, pupils listen to staff and most often follow their advice. The procedures for celebrating success, good effort and behaviour operate well and give pupils clear guidelines on what is acceptable and what is not.

Guidance on how to improve learning in the subjects is less effective, but satisfactory. Records are not comprehensive enough to accurately chart progress and set fine-tuned, individual targets for pupils. The newly introduced commercial scheme links learning targets well with the P scales and National Curriculum levels, but leaders rightly recognise that more work is required before learning in the subjects is supported as well as is the development of personal and social skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and the senior leaders make a strong team and manage the school very well. Day to day the school is a calm, organised and happy place that is enjoyed by pupils and staff alike and where both are able to prosper. All key issues from the last inspection have been met and the leaders, now supported by a good team of governors, have a good capacity for continuing to improve the school.

It is a small and friendly school and staff are keen to offer support to each other. The headteacher, senior leaders and all staff know what is working well in the school because they gain this information, informally and regularly, through daily discussions at lunchtimes and after school. As such, the need to operate formal procedures to gather data has not been seen as an important priority. But this means that strategic planning is not always informed by detailed information on pupils' progress, and the absence of the headteacher from school for a considerable period of each week adds an extra difficulty in planning for the future. Areas for development are appropriately identified, but the prioritisation is not sharp and evaluation not rigorous enough to help assess how well the school is doing.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	4
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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.

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	3
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	2
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

Thank you for helping me find out about your school. Your school provides you with a good education. I especially liked these things:

- The staff like you very much and take great care of you.
- You are making good progress in your learning and, especially, in growing up to be more independent.
- You behave well and try hard to do your best in most of the lessons.
- The teaching is good.
- Your headteacher and other senior staff make sure that the school is a place where you can be happy and can enjoy working hard at your learning.

There are three things I would like to see improved:

- Your teachers know you well but the school does not always write down enough about how well you are doing.
- The teachers need to use this information better when they plan lessons so you each learn what is best for you.
- School leaders, too, need to make more use of the information they have on how well you are doing. They should use it to plan improvements for the school and to decide how good it is.

Please continue to enjoy your school and make sure that you work as hard all the time as you did when I visited.