



The Lyndale School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105136
Local Authority Wirral
Inspection number 287134
Inspection date 23 January 2007
Reporting inspector James Kilner HMI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Lyndale Avenue
School category	Community special		Eastham, Wirral
Age range of pupils	2-11		Merseyside CH62 8DE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 3273682
Number on roll (school)	39	Fax number	0151 3448678
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr Tom Harney
		Headteacher	Mrs P Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
2-11	23 January 2007	287134

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The Lyndale School is a Wirral local authority (LA) Primary Special CLD (complex learning difficulties) school. Current pupils' difficulties range from moderate learning difficulty, severe learning difficulty and profound and multiple learning difficulty.

All pupils are from homes in the Wirral area and all have statements of special educational needs. Levels of attainment on entry to the school are very low. All pupils are of White British heritage. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and has achieved Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Lyndale School is an outstanding school. It is committed to providing a 'totally communicating environment' to meet the many, varied and complex needs of its pupils. Under the dedicated guidance of the headteacher the leadership team and curriculum leaders constantly evaluate the work of the school and plan strategically for the future. The multidisciplinary team of health and therapy professionals work in close harmony with the school to ensure that the 'Every Child Matters' agenda is fully met. Almost every parent/carer responded to the questionnaire and all, without exception, praised highly the work of the school. Parents speak with passion of their children 'surpassing all expectations.' They truly value the work of the school in recognising and celebrating their children's success, no matter how small. As a result, the achievement of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' progress is rigorously monitored and thorough tracking systems ensure additional intervention where needed. Individual education plans are carefully tailored to meet the needs of each pupil.

The school works in close partnership with local schools, business and services to provide outreach work and enhanced learning opportunities in order that pupils may experience social interactions in a variety of situations. This prepares them well for the challenges they face in life.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary: they care for one another well and show great empathy in recognising the complex needs of their peers. Attendance is good despite many pupils requiring periods in hospital.

The curriculum is outstanding. It provides a wide range of experiences for the youngest to the oldest with the strength being in the preparation of individual programmes reflecting age and need. High levels of care permeate the whole work of the school. Children access provision from the age of two. From these early days assessment and identification of need lead to individualised learning and care programmes for each child.

Teaching is at least good with examples of outstanding and inspirational lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) to great effect both as an aid to teaching and as a means for pupils to communicate. Highly effective teaching assistants provide outstanding support and guidance for individual pupils. High expectations for pupils' achievements are adhered to by all.

The totally communicating environment has been constructed using the highest quality resources to produce one which is full of fun, excitement, light and colour. Well designed outdoor provision and resources in the Foundation Stage set the mark for the whole school. Throughout the school there are many opportunities to experience learning through sight, sound, smell and touch. The sound garden, water garden, sensory garden and hydrotherapy pool are just some examples of how pupils are able to experience and interpret the world and develop their individual skills both physically and academically.

Governors are highly supportive of the work of the school. Whilst they monitor the work of the school this currently lacks sufficient rigour so as to present a challenge. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements most notably in the use of ICT and the tracking of pupils' progress. The school has good capacity to improve and provides very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Formalise strategies for governors to evaluate and test the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Given the nature of their complex and individual needs, it is not appropriate to compare pupils' performance with pupils elsewhere. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Early, moderated assessments against performance scales (P scales) ensure that learning is focused on individual needs. As a result pupils in all key stages make rapid progress in relation to their individual learning goals. For all pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, there is an emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills as well as ICT and personal, social and health education (PSHE). In these areas the pupils achieve exceptionally well. The school has set challenging targets for Year 6 pupils for 2007 which they fully expect to meet.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. From early days in school pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong, particularly the effects of their actions on the feelings of others. Pupils care for one another, waiting patiently during registration as each one sings, signs or using electronic aids communicates their name to the class. The school council are proud of the role they undertake. For example, they demonstrated a clear understanding of the needs of all their peers when making decisions on the choice of soft fabrics to enhance the learning of those with more complex needs.

Through their rich experiences in dance, theatre and art, as well as visiting members of religious communities, pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Pupils enjoy lessons, expressing their joy and excitement spontaneously.

Older pupils are able to participate in an extended visit to an outdoor education centre which adds greatly to their self-esteem and confidence. Attendance is good with many pupils keen to return to school following their frequent stays in hospital.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are adamant that bullying will not be tolerated and know where to go if they have any anxieties.

The health of pupils is a key factor in the school and there are many opportunities for all pupils to participate in vigorous indoor and outdoor activities and swimming. The school's unstinting work in this area has been recognised in the recent achievement of Healthy Schools status.

Pupils contribute much to the community through regular coffee mornings and charity fundraising days. Pupils are enthusiastic 'recyclers' taking this responsibility seriously. Sponsorship from the local business community enables the school to enhance outdoor provision. A partnership with a school in Ireland is helping to forge strong cultural and social links which the pupils enjoy.

The school works relentlessly to ensure the future economic well-being of the pupils. Life skills and independence are high priority with many opportunities to learn and respond through the use of early switch technology. This ensures pupils are confident in the skills needed to communicate and change their environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning is outstanding. All staff in school have the highest expectations for the pupils with good levels of challenge as well as support. Lessons often use a multi-sensory approach with light strands, sound effects, textured materials and use of DVD. This approach fully engages the pupils with those pupils with more complex needs able to demonstrate their understanding verbally, through signing or electronic aids. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed and form an integral part of teachers' planning. Teachers' use of carefully differentiated praise, such as 'good reaching' and 'good choice of describing words', encourages pupils to attain their individual targets. Effective assessment procedures ensure that all lessons are planned to meet the individual needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants add much to the success of all lessons. Their highly effective, unobtrusive support ensures lessons proceed at a good pace as they sign and encourage pupils.

All in school know the pupils well and ongoing assessments are carried out during lessons to ensure even the smallest mark of progress is noted and celebrated.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Pupils in Foundation Stage follow the Early Years curriculum and pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 follow the National Curriculum. Every opportunity is taken to ensure the pupils do not miss out on any aspect of primary education. It is underpinned by a remarkable array of modern resources, which ensure the multi-sensory approach is delivered successfully. For example, computer controlled lighting in the hydrotherapy pool allows all pupils to access stimulating and enjoyable water based activities and relaxation classes. This is typical of the way resources are carefully selected to support the multi-sensory approach to the curriculum. Specialist

rooms and areas are well used by all age groups and pupils look forward to their lessons adding greatly to their enjoyment of school. The water garden, listening garden and sensory garden provide high quality environments. Through enhanced provision and use of the P scales the curriculum is individualised and highly successful in meeting the needs of all pupils. Literacy and numeracy together with ICT and PSHE are given a high profile in ensuring that, as far as possible, pupils are given every opportunity to develop their skills towards becoming as independent as possible.

Many opportunities to enjoy extra-curricular activities are provided by local schools and sporting organisations. A nearby football club provides activities for pupils and a local senior school provides a very popular modern foreign languages course.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school rigorously instigates all required child protection procedures and checks to ensure the safety of the pupils. The deployment of the multidisciplinary team in the school is a real strength and key to the success of so much that happens. This team consisting of health professionals, therapists and support workers are based in the school. Much of their work is undertaken in the classrooms and teaching areas so that there are few interruptions to pupils' learning during the day. They work in close harmony with the school and families, always available to offer advice, help and support. There are strong links with local primary schools ensuring pupils experience social interaction and learning beyond the school. This assists pupils to prepare well for the key transfer times in their lives. The school works closely with families and professionals to produce a 'Communication Passport' for each pupil. This informative document provides vital information on individual's medical needs, care plans as well as their likes and dislikes. These are displayed wherever the pupil is being taught. Health and hygiene education together with sex and relationships education ensure that pupils, from an early age, understand the need to stay safe, clean and healthy.

Rigorous assessment procedures and feedback ensures that parents and pupils are always aware of the next steps needed to succeed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. Governors and staff alike are committed to providing the total communicating environment to meet the needs of all pupils. The LA has ensured school funding is kept to a good level during a period when pupil numbers have fallen. The headteacher is exemplary in combining excellent classroom practice with astute and effective management of the school. The recently introduced leadership team and management team structure means that self-evaluation, monitoring and action planning are rigorously and systematically implemented. The result is that the school knows its strengths well and strives constantly to eradicate weaknesses. The school is highly successful in managing the

work of outside agencies and works in close harmony with all in the very best interests of the pupils. Well planned initiatives such as the development of the sensory garden and sound studio are well researched with key markers for their success identified in the monitoring programme. Governors are regular visitors to the school. They fulfil all statutory duties well and provide much support for the work of the school. Their monitoring is not always sufficiently objective to provide a high level of challenge to the work of the school. Nevertheless, no matter how complex the pupils' needs all in school ensure that there is no room for complacency and no room for discrimination.

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

It was so good to meet with you all last week when I came to visit your school. You really made me welcome and I enjoyed having my lunch with you and sharing in the fun of some of your lessons.

Your parents and carers think that your school is absolutely brilliant and do you know what? So do I. Lyndale School is 'an outstanding school' and here are some of the reasons why I know that this is true.

- Your headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. She is very good at making decisions about what will help you best and she has a great team of teachers and governors to support her. This is one of the reasons that you have those brilliant things like a hydrotherapy pool and sound garden.
- Your teachers and helpers are really good at their jobs too. They know exactly what you need to learn and find exciting ways for you to do it. That is why learning is fun and you can all achieve as well as you do.
- You are really well cared for in school. Everybody who works there wants you to succeed and achieve as much as you can. That is why your nurse and your therapists work so hard with your teachers to help in your lessons.
- The governors are going to have an even closer look at what goes on in school so they can tell Pat if she needs some more help with anything.

Once again thank you for your lovely welcome when I came to see you.