

Sandside Lodge School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112466
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289290
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	David Smith

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	68
6th form	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ed Shuttleworth
Headteacher	Mr Martin Alloway
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003
School address	Sandside Road Ulverston Cumbria LA12 9EF
Telephone number	01229 894180
Fax number	01229 894180

Age group	2–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Of the 78 pupils on roll, 16 are girls. All of the pupils have statements of special educational need. They have a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities that include profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low and a small minority of pupils are in public care. The pupils are all White British. The school has received a range of national awards, including ActiveMark, SportsMark and Bronze Eco Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sandside Lodge provides a good education and good value for money. Good leadership and management have ensured that improvements since the last inspection have been effective.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment systems are used effectively to track pupils' progress and set challenging but not inhibiting targets. This enables all pupils to succeed, irrespective of their learning difficulties. They mainly make good progress towards their targets and work is well matched to their needs. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress because pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress in their willingness to take increasing responsibility for their work. The teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' learning needs enables them to challenge pupils of all abilities. Pupils are involved in the assessment of their own learning but the marking of their work is inconsistent and opportunities are missed for them to be fully aware of how to improve. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good and the children achieve well. They enjoy the opportunities provided to experience and take part in practical tasks and show good progress in their ability to work with increasing independence.

The sixth form provision is good. Good leadership and management are effective in monitoring and where necessary improving the provision. Students are provided with good care, guidance and support that help to promote their good personal development and well-being. The good curriculum is extended by the courses provided at a local college. Students in the sixth form and the pupils at Key Stage 4 make satisfactory progress in their work-related skills, but are capable of doing even better.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Learners' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, pupils' cultural development is satisfactory because they do not have a clear enough understanding of what it is like to live in a culturally diverse society. Pupils enjoy their education, and this is demonstrated by their positive attitudes and good behaviour. They report that they like coming to school and their attendance is good. Pupils, including those with autism, make good progress in their ability to work with others. They feel safe from bullying and have confidence in the support available if they have concerns. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school has national awards that reflect their good provision for sport and physical exercise. Pupils make good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and their ability to work in teams. Pupils make a positive contribution to day-to-day aspects of the life of the school and are confident that their views are listened to and respected. There are effective links with parents to help involve them in their children's education. Safeguarding procedures are in place and the school works well with other agencies to reinforce the good care, guidance and support provided for the pupils.

The curriculum is good. The grouping of pupils and the organisation of activities help pupils to achieve well. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn alongside their mainstream peers. The curriculum is rich and stimulating and engages pupils' interest.

The school's self-review is accurate and their evaluation of the quality of its provision has contributed to improvements in the use of data to tackle underachievement. Senior leaders supported by the governors promote a good capacity to maintain continual improvement. This is shown by the recent improvements in the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. There is an

effective focus on the provision of equal opportunities for all of the pupils in this inclusive school.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form provision is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good and students achieve well. Despite the limitations of the accommodation at the school, students are provided with a good curriculum. This is made possible by the effective use of facilities in the locality. For example, students attend a good range of courses at a local college and take part in an increasing range of work placements. For example, they enjoy their hairdressing and motor vehicle engineering courses, where they learn alongside their mainstream peers. They also attend more general courses that help to build their confidence and independence skills. Leadership and management are good; as a result, the curriculum is carefully tailored to meet the students' wide range of learning needs. Care, guidance and support are good and students are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Their involvement in an exciting range of activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and residential trips help to promote their good personal development. The provision of enterprise activities is satisfactory and, as a result, students make satisfactory progress in the development in their work-related skills

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking of pupils' work is consistently good across the school and that pupils are aware of how to improve their work.
- Extend the opportunities provided for pupils to understand life in a culturally diverse society.
- Develop the provision for learners' work-related skills at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Boys and girls achieve well. The extent of their learning difficulties means that they do not attain national expectations but they make good progress towards their challenging targets. Pupils eligible for free school meals and those in public care achieve as well as their peers.

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Children carry out their tasks with increasing levels of independence and make good progress in their ability to work with others. In particular, they enjoy opportunities to join in activities where they can learn through exploration.

The level of challenge for pupils at Key Stage 1 is inconsistent and, as a result, their achievement is satisfactory rather than good. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in English; in particular, a good range of strategies is used to boost pupils' communication skills. Consequently, pupils use appropriate methods for communicating their views; for example, in signing or when indicating choice or preference. Pupils also make good progress in their numeracy skills; for example, higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress in the use of a calculator. Also, pupils take a full and active part in a good range of investigations in science and this helps to engage their interest and promote good progress. A survey of pupils' views concluded that they particularly enjoy and achieve well in practical subjects such as music and physical education. Good use is made of ICT in other subjects and pupils enjoy the

opportunities to practice and extend their skills. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress in challenging accredited courses and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy their learning and attend regularly. Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. Pupils have strong relationships with staff and feel safe in school. This gives them the confidence to communicate with staff if they have any concerns. Pupils excelled in their joint arts performance alongside pupils from a local primary school. They respond well to the opportunities provided to promote healthy lifestyles. The new gymnasium facility is used effectively to improve levels of fitness and pupils enjoy their weekly water skills session at the local swimming baths. Also, pupils drink water regularly and in some lessons they take part in exercises prior to their learning and this helps them to be alert. Pupils take on increasing responsibility as they progress through the school. Boys and girls on the school council express their opinions confidently and feel that their views are listened to. They are very positive about their residential trips and would like activities to be provided after school. The school's Eco Committee has effectively led initiatives to increase the care of the environment and their work has helped the school gain an Eco Award. Pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities to understand life in a culturally diverse society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Typically, no time is wasted, teaching is well planned and pupils achieve well. The effective use of assessment ensures that work is mainly pitched at the right level to meet pupils' wide range of learning needs. Tasks are sufficiently broken down to be accessible for the lower attaining pupils. Members of staff are positive role models. They know the pupils very well and give pupils the confidence to become more independent learners. Pupils' successes are celebrated. Relationships are good, which helps to promote a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Interactive whiteboards are used very well; for example, to extend pupils' understanding of the factors that promote healthy lifestyles; and boost their ability to calculate the area of irregular shapes. Every opportunity is taken to make pupils' learning relevant and motivating; for example, by extensive use of the local environment and, consequently, they make good progress. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. At times, pupils are not made aware of how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good and meets pupils' wide range of learning needs. The carefully planned curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage motivates the children and this helps them to achieve well.

Members of staff have worked hard to provide a particularly stimulating curriculum that is tailored to meet the needs of pupils in Years 7 to 11. For example, a parent described the life skills course as, 'innovative and exciting with good promotion of independence skills'. Throughout the school, there is good support for pupils' key skills including their literacy, numeracy and ICT and they achieve well. The good provision for pupils' personal development boosts their self-confidence and ability to work with others. The school has appropriate specialist rooms and a pupil survey indicated that they thoroughly enjoy their work in the practical subjects. The work-related curriculum, including enterprise activities, is satisfactory and pupils make adequate progress in their work-place skills. The school makes particularly good use of the local area to enrich the curriculum. The school provides an extensive range of visits and visitors to extend pupils' learning. The staff team has a good range of skills; in particular, their expertise is used to promote music as an inspirational aspect of school life. Staff and pupils are keen to organise after school activities but this is restricted by transport arrangements for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The staff team works hard to promote a safe environment. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and risk assessments are carefully managed. The staff team is very supportive of the pupils; as a result, pupils feel safe from bullying and other forms of discrimination. The good tracking of pupils' progress ensures that the staff is alerted to any signs of underachievement and action is taken to promote their good achievement and personal development. The staff are well trained and have the expertise to meet pupils' wide range of learning needs. The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils make generally good progress. Parents are very confident in the quality of care provided and typically they comment that, 'the care in the school is second to none and staff are very available and show high levels of commitment'. The school now provides good detailed information to parents, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear agenda for improvements to the school and he has good support from the effective leadership team. The staff team share his vision for continual improvement and make an effective contribution to the school's good capacity to improve. Self-review procedures now involve subject leaders and they continue to extend their expertise; for example, by attendance at middle management courses. Performance management systems are effective and are linked to the good programme of professional development for staff. This is an inclusive school with many exciting opportunities provided for pupils to enjoy their learning alongside their mainstream peers. Governors know the school well; in particular, the chair of governors is very actively involved with the school. They provide valuable support to senior leaders and share their commitment for continual improvement. There are, for example, exciting and necessary plans in place to build improved

play areas. Mainstream staff value the high quality support and guidance provided for them and their pupils by staff from the school.

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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	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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	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	3	

The quality of provision

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

Sandside Lodge School

Sandside Road

Ulverston

Cumbria

LA12 9EF

21 March 2007

Dear Pupils

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Sandside Lodge School. You made me feel very welcome and your performance with the pupils from the local primary school was particularly well done. The school council has many good ideas and I hope you get your new play areas in the near future.

This is what I found out about your school.

- Your headteacher, with good support from the governors and staff, ensures that you do your best and make good progress in your learning.
- You enjoy the good range of exciting visits organised by the staff. The residential visits are particularly popular.
- The staff makes sure that your work is neither too difficult or too easy and you make good progress in your learning.
- Many of you in the sixth form have good opportunities to follow courses in the local college.
- You thoroughly enjoy your time in school and behave well.
- Members of staff provide you with good care and guidance, encouraging you to stay healthy and keep safe.

Even though I thought your school was good it could still be improved.

I think that the following things would help to do this.

- Staff need to make sure that you always know how to improve your work.
- You should have more opportunities to learn about life in different cultures.
- The enterprise activities for the older pupils and students need to be extended to help boost your work-related skills.

Yours sincerely

David Smith

Lead inspector