



# Alfreton Park Community Special School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113040  
**Local Authority** DERBYSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 289491  
**Inspection dates** 21–22 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Susan Aldridge

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Wingfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Alfreton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19		Derbyshire DE55 7AL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 832019
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	59	<b>Fax number</b>	01773 833227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Francine Franklin
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rosemary Mackenzie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 February 2003		

<b>Age group</b> 4–19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21–22 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 289491
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school caters mainly for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties, with some challenging behaviour. Nearly half have autism and a small numbers have physical difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Almost all are White British. Very few pupils are in public care. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds; an above average proportion is eligible for free school meals. The school's work in promoting healthy eating has been recognised through the Health Promoting Schools Award. It has submitted an application to be a specialist school. It is subject to reorganisation although the nature of this has not yet been decided.

## 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, which is how it sees itself. Good leadership and management lie at the heart of its success. It provides good value for money. Good self evaluation correctly identifies the school's strengths and areas for development. The headteacher and staff are strongly committed to continuous improvement and teamwork is well developed. A positive climate, in which relationships are excellent, and pupils and staff learn together, supports development well. Despite a lack of clarity about the school's future role, staff morale is high and the headteacher has been proactive in planning for possible options.

Although standards are below those expected for pupils of a similar age, this is because of the considerable learning difficulties and disabilities that pupils have. From the time they start at the school pupils make good progress and achieve well because they are well taught, have a rich variety of enjoyable learning experiences and are well supported. The school can demonstrate clearly the progress that individual pupils make in each subject, because they have collected assessment information for several years. However, staff do not routinely collect quantitative information showing how successful pupils are in achieving the targets on their individual education plans, both academic and personal. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate success.

Pupils' personal development is also good. Because they are taught well about relationships, healthy lifestyles and personal safety, pupils get on well with one another, are polite and welcoming to visitors, make healthy choices and know how to keep safe. They also contribute enthusiastically to the school and wider communities, and develop well the knowledge and skills that will help them to become responsible citizens.

There is outstanding practice in working productively in partnership with parents and a wide range of professionals so that pupils have the support and help that they need. Excellent pastoral care creates a very strong sense of well-being amongst pupils, who feel safe and secure in school, and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life. It also leads to high parental satisfaction with the school.

There has been significant improvement since the last inspection and the capacity to improve further is very secure. The curriculum is much broader now and is good. Much has been done to improve the internal and external quality of the building and the grounds. However, accommodation is not suitable for secondary aged pupils, and the cost of development is too great for the school to fund from its own budget, which has not kept pace with the changes in pupils population in recent years. There are no specialist areas for teaching science or design and technology; as a result teachers are limited in what they can safely provide. The hall floor is on two levels, making it unsuitable for secondary physical education (PE). There are no changing rooms or showers. Staff make the best use of the accommodation to provide a stimulating environment and use external facilities where this is possible. The school is actively seeking alternative sources of funding to finance improvements too.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Liaise with the local education authority to improve the accommodation and remedy the weaknesses identified in this report.
- Make more effective use of the wealth of assessment information that the school has to demonstrate the progress that pupils make in their academic and personal development.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Although standards in the school are well below average, this is because of the nature and severity of pupils' learning difficulties. Boys and girls of all ages make good progress whatever their starting points and learning difficulties. This is because they are taught well and given good levels of support. The school has collected assessment information for several years, and this demonstrates well the progress that pupils make in their time at school. However, whilst pupils' individual targets are carefully monitored and qualitatively evaluated to ensure that they are challenging, information is not systematically collected to show the proportion of targets achieved. Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection, as underlying weaknesses in the curriculum have been dealt with. The school has also introduced a range of accredited courses and older pupils now leave with a good range of unit awards that recognise their achievements in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, social and independence skills. Last summer five pupils achieved 58 unit awards between them.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Personal development and well being are good. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff ensure that pupils trust and respect adults in the school and will readily go to a chosen individual if they are troubled or need support. Pupils express confidence that any difficulties, such as unkindness by others, will be dealt with speedily and effectively. This positive atmosphere also ensures that behaviour is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and hugely enjoy their time in school. As a consequence attendance is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because these elements are covered well in lessons, through visits into the community and in the wider life of the school. Social skills and moral understanding are very well developed and pupils have a strong sense of fairness and justice. Unfortunately, pupils no longer have opportunities to socialise with mainstream peers, because of budget reductions. The work of the representatives on the school council is impressive and makes a strong contribution to the life and ethos of the school. Cultural and spiritual sensitivity are well developed through the many art and drama activities, as well as visits to places of worship. Pupils know the importance of healthy eating and the value of regular exercise.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are well supported in improving their skills through team teaching, monitoring, target setting and coaching. Members of the leadership team provide good role models.

Teachers and their assistants work in an effective partnership to support pupils' learning. Because staffing levels are good, and staff are skilled in the management of behaviour, pupils are well engaged during lessons and participate well in activities provided. Most planning is good, with tasks that provide the right amount of challenge. Occasionally, tasks are too easy or difficult for a small number of pupils. Visits and role-play are used successfully to make learning meaningful and enjoyable. Good relationships and regular giving of praise help to keep pupils' motivation high. Teaching encourages pupils' personal development well, such as through sharing and co-operative tasks. Appealing resources and enjoyable activities are used and these encourage involvement and interest. Teachers have a good range of strategies for meeting pupils' individual learning needs, such as the use of signing, symbols and visual timetables. As a result, all make equally good progress in most lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The good curriculum offers a rich diet of activities to support learning. It is well planned to be relevant to pupils' individual needs and builds successfully on prior learning, starting well in the Foundation Stage. The full range of subjects is provided, often through imaginative themed activities, such as the arts week. Visiting artists and performers make a valuable contribution to these. Higher up the school the inadequate accommodation limits the range of experiences that can be provided; for example, science, physical education and design and technology. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in developing accreditation for older pupils, providing vocational study opportunities in local college settings and arranging helpful work experience placements. This combination of activities builds well on the effective teaching of basic skills across the school to develop older pupils' workplace skills and prepare leavers well for the next stage of their life. Good use is made of the wider community to enhance subjects studied in school. The curriculum is most effective in promoting pupils' personal and social development and self-esteem. Outstanding enrichment activities, such as lunchtime and after school clubs, outdoor activities such as sailing and fishing and residential education, including trips to France, widen pupils' experiences and add greatly to their enjoyment.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good, helping pupils to thrive and achieve well. Parents particularly appreciate the excellent pastoral care, which is supported by regular dialogue between school and home and excellent partnership with parents. They also value the high quality collaboration with a wide range of agencies and professionals, all of which benefits their children. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are robust and effective. Current government requirements are met. However, the lack of changing rooms and showers restricts older pupils' privacy as well as maintenance of their personal hygiene.

Statutory requirements that relate to statements of special educational need are met well. However, not all individual education plans are of equally good quality; occasionally targets are not measurable or there are no success criteria, making it difficult to evaluate progress. The school's strong approach to celebrating success, good effort, behaviour and attendance operate well; they provide clear guidelines of acceptability and are highly motivating to pupils.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is shared with staff and governors. A particular strength is in the support and training provided for staff who continually develop their skills as teachers and managers. All staff with leadership responsibilities discharge them well. For instance, subject leaders are fully involved in checking progress and provision in their subjects. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are developing their roles as critical friends. They do ask questions, and make visits to school, but have limited involvement in direct monitoring and evaluation.

Considerable improvement has been made to the accommodation and grounds since the last inspection but the school does not have the capital necessary to fund the extent of improvement that is still needed to make the building fit for secondary pupils. Finances are well managed. Governors have had to make some difficult decisions about expenditure, and a sensible contingency is maintained despite budget cuts. The headteacher is proactive in seeking other sources of funding and the active 'friends' group is supportive too.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

23 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Alfreton Park Community Special School, Wingfield Road, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7AL

Thank you for making us welcome at your school, and talking to us about it. We came to see how well you are getting on and whether there is anything that could be better.

We found that yours is a good school. You said how much you enjoy it and we could see this ourselves. You are all getting on well with your school work, and growing up into young people who know how to keep safe, eat healthily and take exercise. You also help at school by doing jobs, and you think of others when you raise money for charities. As you get older you learn about the world of work and how to get on well in groups. We were very impressed with the way everyone greeted us by shaking hands and introducing themselves. Most of you are very well behaved.

The staff at school work with a lot of other people to make sure that you are well cared for and have the help that you need. They also make sure that you have lots of interesting and enjoyable activities. These things help you to be happy at school and learn well. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in lessons to help you learn. The staff are all doing a good job. Mrs Mackenzie and her team make sure that the staff also learn, so they get better at their jobs all the time.

There are two main things that need to be done to make the school even better. First, the building needs to be altered so that it is more suited to older pupils. The hall is too small for PE and there are no proper changing rooms or showers. We have asked the staff and governors to continue to do all they can to improve the building for you. We have also asked the staff to keep an eye on how many of your targets you reach so that they can see how well you and the school are doing.

We hope that you will all keep up the good work, and wish you all the best for the future.

Mrs S Aldridge Lead Inspector