



The Willoughby School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120763
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291850
Inspection dates 12–13 February 2007
Reporting inspector Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Special	School address	South Road
School category	Community		Bourne
Age range of pupils	2–19		Lincolnshire PE10 9JE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01778 425203
Number on roll (school)	71	Fax number	01778 425284
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr I Croft
		Headteacher	Mr A Booker
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

Most pupils have severe learning difficulties and a few have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional needs, which include a small number with complex medical needs. About a third of pupils are autistic and a very few have multi-sensory impairments or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Nearly a half of all pupils are unable to use spoken language.

Pupils transfer to this specialist school from other special schools as well as mainstream primary and secondary schools. Recently, a small number of children under the age of five were admitted. Pupils' levels of knowledge and skills are exceptionally low as a result of their learning difficulties and disabilities. They are predominantly of White British heritage. Most have home backgrounds that are socially and economically advantaged.

The school provides services for children of pre-school age and their parents. It also works with local primary and secondary schools, backing up their provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. It supports a play scheme, holiday club and a twice weekly after-school club.

The school received its second Investors in People Award in 2004 and Healthy School status in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's effectiveness is good and it is providing good value for money. This agrees with the school's own evaluation of its work. The school has the full confidence of parents as a result of its success in promoting their children's well-being and, because of their vulnerability, keeping them safe and healthy. The care taken of pupils is outstanding, as extremely close attention is paid to their personal, physical and medical needs. As a result, pupils' personal development is good and they increase their capacity for taking care of themselves independently. Pupils are happy, confident individuals who willingly contribute in school and beyond. They enjoy good relationships and the wide range of work activities available during and after school.

The broad vision for the school, created by the headteacher and governors, has led successfully to providing support in the community. The school is using its good expertise and resources to help very young children with learning difficulties and their families. It is also making a valued contribution to other schools by helping them to manage their provision for pupils with learning difficulties.

The school has a good curriculum complemented by many good additional resources. Accommodation, after a complete refurbishment, is excellent. There are very few children in Foundation Stage at present but provision for them is good. The school has worked steadfastly on expanding its facilities and improving its expertise to meet the widening span of pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities. Well established specialist approaches, including those for autistic pupils and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, contribute to good progress and achievement. The use of a wide range of resources to aid communication, signs and symbols in particular, is effective. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers, classroom assistants and other adults know each pupil well. Behavioural difficulties are understood well and managed effectively. Pupils' individual targets are matched closely to the point they are at in learning. Consequently, although standards are very low, pupils have achieved well by the time they leave school and post-16 students are well prepared for the future.

The school is well led and managed. Much of the evaluation of its work is effective and helps in planning developments effectively. As a result, its capacity for improvement is good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Although assessment of learning taking place in classes is good, the analysis of information about pupils' progress is limited. Currently, this is being dealt with by the implementation of a more refined means of assessing pupils' small steps of progress. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Whilst the observation of lessons ensures that features of good teaching are in place and effective, to raise achievement further, the school needs a sharper focus on promoting best practice found in school and beyond.

What the school should do to improve further

- To raise achievement further, combine more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and a sharper analysis of pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are very low as a result of pupils' severe learning difficulties and disabilities. However, their achievement is good because they all respond so well and enjoy their work and activities. As these are comprehensive and well planned to meet all pupils' needs, they make good progress. The many pupils who need to use signs and symbols, autistic pupils and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties in particular, achieve well. All pupils acquire greater independence in decision-making and problem solving. The vocational and self-help orientation of the courses for post-16 students and, for them, the good amount of learning beyond school, means they achieve well and are being well prepared for the future. Assessment in classes is matched to the point each pupil is at in learning. Therefore, their individual targets are appropriate and challenging and pupils make good progress towards them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The high quality of care for every pupil means they develop a sense of security and enjoy school. Pupils report that they feel happy and safe and their attendance is good. The close attention paid to personal development is effective in making pupils self-reliant and, as far as possible, enabling them to manage their lives independently. They make good progress in developing a healthy lifestyle through physical exercise and making healthy eating choices. Behaviour is good and so there is an orderly and happy atmosphere during lessons and around school. Pupils take a good deal of interest in and are always keen to take part in the many activities for them. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Many pupils enjoy contributing to the life of the school. Older pupils are actively involved in the school council and are gaining confidence in sharing their views and ideas for improvements. Pupils benefit from taking part in a wide range of clubs, concerts and regular visits to places of educational interest.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. The effective learning taking place begins with the good assessment teachers and their assistants make of each pupil's progress in lessons and towards their individual targets. Consequently, the planning of lessons is well focused on what each pupil needs to learn. Work for more able pupils is carefully explained. They are told clearly what is expected from them and this is a great help to their concentration and effort. The arrangements for grouping pupils according to their capabilities are really making learning precise and appropriately challenging. Many good resources, specialist areas for sensory development in particular, are used productively in

supporting pupils' learning key skills. A good emphasis on learning personal, social and independence skills contributes positively to each pupil's health and well-being. Post-16 students are taught effectively to learn in collaborative ways and take increasing responsibility for their own learning. All pupils are well supported by the adults in their classroom. They know pupils well and the good expertise and special approaches used in teaching mean that whatever the complexity is of pupils' needs, they are met effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The variety of work and activities that the school offers corresponds well to the wide range of pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities. As it is regularly reviewed and evaluated, the curriculum continues to improve its match to pupils' needs. The school is developing further its individual learning programmes for each pupil and the refinement taking place in the measurement of pupils' progress is beginning to sharpen the focus of these programmes.

The promotion of pupils' independence, communication skills, numeracy and physical development is well planned. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection and older pupils are gaining good experience of using new technology in school and through courses at a local secondary school. Good personal, social and health education contributes well to extending pupils' independence and social awareness. Post-16 students have access to good opportunities for careers guidance and for developing their life skills and independence. Their preparation for the future through work-related learning is good, although opportunities for work experience in the locality are limited at present.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The provision made for pupils' care, guidance and support is good, although the care taken of pupils is excellent. The very high quality of the school's accommodation and facilities makes a significant contribution to pupils' security and well-being. The procedures for child protection, risk assessments, medical and emergency aid are thorough. Staff are very well trained to meet pupils' daily care needs. Good working relationships with support agencies ensure there is much of the advice and expertise required to support pupils, although the contribution from speech and language therapy and physiotherapy services has lessened. Despite this, pupils are well supported in developing communication and physical skills.

The assessment of pupils' progress is good in identifying individual targets and planning appropriate learning opportunities. The introduction of a scheme for measuring the small steps of pupils' progress is intended to strengthen support and raise achievement through rigorous analysis of more detailed information on progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives very clear direction to the work of the school and sets high expectations of what can yet be achieved. The senior leadership team and all those who have responsibilities demonstrate strong leadership qualities. Governors play an effective part in supporting the school and in helping with its direction, which has the whole-hearted support of parents. The vision for the school is a broad one. It has successfully extended its work into the community through support for parents and neighbouring schools. Local schools and colleges are keen to be involved and share their resources, which is to the considerable benefit of pupils' progress.

The impact of the school's work on meeting pupils' needs is monitored closely. The quality of teaching and learning is scrutinised which, alongside good professional development for staff, contributes to continued improvement. However, a sharper focus is needed in monitoring teaching and learning to elicit best practice to raise standards further in pupils' communication skills, physical development and independence. The closer tracking of pupils' performance currently being developed could become a major component in achieving this.

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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?	2
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

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	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
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

14 February 2007

Dear Pupils

The Willoughby School, South Road, Bourne, Lincolnshire, PE10 9JE

Thank you for your very warm welcome when we visited your school. We were really pleased to see how happy you all are at school and how well you are making progress.

These are the things we found best about your school:

- It is good in every way it supports you and helps you to learn, with the entire staff looking after you extremely well and keeping you safe.
- You make good progress because you work hard at everything your teachers encourage you to do.
- You enthusiastically take part in and thoroughly enjoy all of the activities the school provides.
- You all behave well and are very kind and helpful to each other.

This is what we have asked your teachers to do to improve your school:

- The school is determined to help you make even more progress, so we have asked the headteacher to look closely at how lessons and other activities can be improved to achieve this.

We wish you all well for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead Inspector