

# Aynsley Special School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124498
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	293011
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Arnalena Bee

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	119
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Prophet
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Hardstaff
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Aynsleys Drive Blythe Bridge Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9HJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 392071
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 388911

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Most of the pupils who attend Aynsley have moderate learning difficulties. The Aynsley Centre, attached to the school, caters for 20 pupils who have more complex needs mainly relating to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Pupils are mainly from White British backgrounds, with a very small minority coming from other ethnic groups. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English. All pupils have a statement of special educational need.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Aynsley is a satisfactory school. Many parents are pleased with how the school enables their children to gain in confidence and develop a liking for school. One parent wrote, 'In the few years my son has attended Aynsley, he has come on in leaps and bounds. He now enjoys going to school'. Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Many pupils in the main school enjoy coming to school, although there are a number who say they dislike school. Attendance is satisfactory but much better in the main school than in the Aynsley Centre. Until 2005, attendance had improved since the previous inspection, but the impact of the attendance of pupils in the Aynsley Centre has contributed to a decline. The number of exclusions, mainly in the Aynsley Centre, although considerably reduced, is still too high, as is the number of pupils who do not attend regularly.

The school's good partnership with the outside world enables pupils to benefit well in a number of ways. For example, pupils have opportunities to go rock climbing, and links with the local Drugs team develops their awareness of the dangers of taking drugs. The school is adopting changes to promote healthy living and the impact so far has been satisfactory. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others, despite having difficulties articulating their concerns. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about raising money for 'poorly people' and those who are less fortunate than they are. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils feel safe and parents are generally happy with the way their children are cared for when in school.

A major strength in the satisfactory curriculum is that all pupils are taught British Sign Language, which enables them to interact more successfully with the pupils who have hearing difficulties. Curriculum provision for the youngest children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but is particularly good in enabling the children to develop confidence and the skills needed to interact socially. Daily sessions where adults sit with the children as they eat breakfast together promote this well. Although the school has extended the number of courses it offers its oldest pupils, a few in Key Stage 4 are capable of attempting more GCSE courses to enable them to reach their full potential. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory but pupils in the lower school do better than others because they more often receive good teaching and achieve well. Achievement is satisfactory for the large majority of pupils. By the time they leave school, pupils are soundly prepared for the world of work, despite standards being low when compared to schools nationally.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leaders and managers are a relatively new team but have a clear idea of how well the school is doing. They have made a satisfactory start on improving the quality of teaching and learning. There has been a clear focus on target setting and pupils have academic as well as personal targets to enable them to become more involved with their own learning. The school acknowledges there is still a way to go. There has been a big improvement in developing the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage, which has enhanced the provision for the youngest children in the school considerably. A small proportion of schools' where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor teaching more effectively so that pupils of all ages receive good quality teaching, enabling them to achieve well.

- Improve attendance and further reduce the number of exclusions for the older pupils in the Aynsley Centre.
- Develop the Key Stage 4 curriculum so that pupils leave school with qualifications that demonstrate their best achievement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. The rate of progress that pupils make in both the main school and the Aynsley Centre is variable and is determined by the quality of teaching they receive. Pupils in the lower part of the school, including the few children in the Foundation Stage, make the best progress because for much of their time they receive good quality teaching that enables them to achieve well. Recent improvements in the systems used to track pupils' progress enable staff to check how well pupils are getting on. In addition, they highlight those who are making good progress which enables them to add extra support to those few who need to get back on track. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is low, as are standards generally throughout the school. Older pupils take entry level subjects and a few pupils take GCSE art. The school acknowledges that previous test results show that a few pupils in Key Stage 4 could be attempting more GCSE courses.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Most pupils behave well but pupils' comments and inspection evidence indicate that there is a persistent group of pupils for whom this is not the case. Behaviour is satisfactory overall but it is generally good in the main school, where there are fewer incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils meet the adults' high expectations for behaviour at break and lunchtimes and the dining hall is a calm, pleasant place for pupils to eat lunch and chat. Pupils' attitudes in lessons vary according to the quality of teaching. Some teachers have to work hard in lessons to promote positive attitudes and for pupils to take a lead in their learning. Pupils begin to learn how they can make a difference and contribute to the community, for example in taking positions of responsibility, such as on the school council. Parents and pupils agree that the school is a safe place. Safety is emphasised as pupils develop skills for the workplace; for example, older pupils are taught how to travel safely without an adult. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Particular strengths are the cultural opportunities, for example looking at the art from a variety of cultures and older pupils developing their confidence to speak in public.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

In the main school and in the Aynsley Centre, the quality of teaching and learning varies from class to class and often from subject to subject. There is some good teaching in both the main school and the Aynsley Centre but too much is satisfactory. Learning is at its best when teachers continually reinforce and promote the development of personal and social skills, in particular the need to listen carefully and sit properly. They explain in simple language what the pupils are going to learn and continue to remind them as the lesson progresses. Relationships within classrooms are generally good but learning is impeded when teachers do not manage challenging

behaviour well. For example, when pupils are allowed to shout out instead of putting up their hands.. Learning is also slowed when work is not accurately matched to the needs of the pupils. The support staff, in particular those who support pupils who have difficulty hearing, make a good contribution to pupils' learning. There are some good examples of teachers' marking informing pupils well about what they need to do to improve, but this is inconsistent across the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

National strategies and guidelines are used appropriately to make sure that learning is built on each year. The provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is satisfactory. Interactive whiteboards in all classrooms are used well by teachers to support many curriculum subjects and add to pupils' enjoyment as they learn. Pupils are timetabled to develop ICT skills in the computer suite. Few pupils were seen using computers to support learning during lessons. The school offers a satisfactory selection of courses for older pupils but acknowledges the necessity to further develop the Key Stage 4 curriculum so that, for example, more pupils are given the opportunity to attempt GCSE courses other than art. Pupils' artwork is highly valued and this is shown by the interesting displays around the school. A good range of out-of-school activities and visits and visitors invited into school promote the development of pupils' personal and social skills well and reinforce and develop learning in most subject areas.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils receive satisfactory care, guidance and support. There are good links with support agencies such as Connexions. The school has a successful system for managing pupils' behaviour in the main school but this has not yet had a positive impact in the Aynsley Centre. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory. The school's systems for tracking and evaluating pupils' progress have been recently upgraded. Pupils have targets to improve both their academic performance and personal behaviour. Pupils know their behaviour targets but are less familiar with their academic targets and so do not always know what they have to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since 2003, the leadership team and the governing body have focused on the establishment of the provision for a more challenging group of pupils in the Aynsley Centre. The leadership team has changed considerably since September 2006 and a new leader has been appointed for the Aynsley Centre. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, considering the time and effort required to win the confidence of the staff so that they could cater for the new group of pupils in the Aynsley Centre. There are improved procedures, for example to track pupil progress and to audit improvements in behaviour. It is not yet possible to see the impact of some of these measures, introduced since January 2007. Appropriate progress has been made with developing the Key Stage 4 curriculum but the school acknowledges that further improvement is required. The school has the capacity to improve further. Governance is satisfactory and provides both support and challenge to 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>	<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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 April 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Aynsley Special School, Aynsley Drive, Blythe Bridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST11 9HJ

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school a few weeks ago. We really enjoyed talking to you and think you treat visitors politely and courteously.

I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school.

- The adults who support you during lessons know you well and try hard to make sure you do your best.
- We particularly enjoyed looking at all your artwork which was on display.
- You go on lots of well planned visits, and many visitors are invited into school to make learning more fun.
- All of you have opportunities to take part in a good range of out-of-school activities.
- Your school gives a satisfactory education.
- A large proportion of you, in the main school, behave well.

To make the school even better, we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that teaching is good in all lessons so that you all make good progress
- make sure that the older pupils, in the Aynsley Centre, come to school more regularly and behave better so that fewer are excluded
- offer a better selection of courses to the older pupils in Years 10 and 11 so that more pupils can attempt GCSE courses, achieve better and reach higher standards.

Try to do your best every day.

Yours sincerely, Nina Bee Lead Inspector