



Newfield School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132051
Local Authority Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number 293928
Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007
Reporting inspector John Atkinson

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Old Bank Lane
School category	Community special		Blackburn, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	2–19		BB1 2TW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 588600
Number on roll (school)	149	Fax number	01254 588601
Number on roll (6th form)	50		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Jack Peet
		Headteacher	Mrs Jane Barrie
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2003		

Age group 2–19	Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007	Inspection number 293928
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Newfield School is a school for students and pupils with complex learning difficulties and additional physical, sensory and emotional difficulties. Students and pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The percentage of those entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. Just under half of the students and pupils are from families of Asian heritage. Just over half of the students and pupils do not have English as their first language. There are six looked after children, one child from a traveller background and two children from homes where parents are asylum seekers. All students and pupils have statements of special educational need. The school moved into new purpose built premises in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives outstanding value for money. It is a shining example of how meticulous care and attention paid to an individual's needs lead to exemplary progress in learning, resulting in outstanding achievement across the whole curriculum. Students' and pupils' enjoyment of every aspect of the school's provision is reflected in the enthusiasm with which they tackle even the most challenging activities and tasks that staff set. The outcome, over time, is that they grow in self-confidence, acquire increasingly greater independence and develop a huge desire to participate in the wide array of available learning and social opportunities. Parents acknowledge the impact of the school and how much their children look forward to attending because of the outstanding care and support they receive. As one parent commented, 'He has developed from a little boy who was dependent on his carers for everything to a young man with a lot of independence'.

The headteacher's exemplary leadership is a key factor in establishing and sustaining a hugely positive ethos in which students, pupils and staff feel individually valued and appreciated. Her passionate commitment to the very highest standards for every child is borne out by the outstanding level of inclusion throughout the school and the total commitment to ensuring extended and equal opportunities to all, regardless of ability or need. The outcome is that students and pupils' self-esteem is significantly boosted, creating the ideal platform for reaching, and often exceeding, their potential.

The view of pupils themselves is that 'this is a fantastic school and the staff are brilliant because we always do so many different things' and it is hard to disagree! Throughout the day, there is a calm, structured and purposeful approach to every aspect of school life. These secure routines underpin the very safe and secure environment that emerges and enables individuals to flourish. The relationships between staff and students and pupils are outstanding and inspire total confidence in sharing any anxieties or problems.

Students' and pupils' achievements are outstanding. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and children have a flying start to their education. Their needs are quickly assessed and very specific interventions are adopted, resulting in children making excellent progress, albeit in very small steps. Individuals achieve exceptionally well in the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy because they are taught very effectively. Teachers have high expectations and are very skilled in keeping progress in learning as the main focus of all lessons. Planning is extremely detailed yet staff want to increase the emphasis on how individual progress targets can be better linked to the aims of lessons. Staff use an array of specialist teaching techniques in managing challenging behaviour and promoting learning for those with the most complex learning needs. The assessment of progress in the small steps that students and pupils make is very thorough. The school recognises it could be further developed by involving individuals in the assessment of their own learning. By the time students are ready to leave school, they achieve good results in accredited courses, including GCSEs in a number of subjects.

Students' and pupils' personal development is also outstanding. The respect they have for each other, the staff, the community and the school environment is exemplary. Individuals' health and physical well-being is a top priority of the school because of its impact on the progress in and enjoyment of learning. The attention to ensuring that individuals are comfortable and ready to participate in learning is exhaustive with a very positive outcome in terms of achievement. Students and pupils have a real 'voice' in the school. The school council is a vibrant group that speaks up on behalf of others. The school's emphasis on independence, responsibility and team building is very influential in promoting student and pupil involvement in the community and prepares them very well for the challenges they face when they leave school.

The curriculum is outstanding because of the ways in which it is adapted to meet the highly personal needs of individuals. They participate in an enormous number of exciting events and activities resulting in pupils making outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum introduces many challenges and frequently pushes students and pupils into previously unknown territory but this does not put them at risk. Instead it is motivational and releases a belief in them that raises their expectations and ambitions. Every child really does matter to every member of staff, and individual needs – be they learning, social or medical – are particularly well catered for. There is undoubtedly a 'can do' culture throughout the school and each individual is encouraged to believe that the expectations they have of themselves will make a big difference to their lives. The new building has experienced on-going difficulties with information and communication technology and this has restricted its use in teaching and learning, limiting the potential of some activities.

The school's outstanding provision derives directly from the quality of leadership and management. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who drives the school forward with vision, passion and commitment. She is very well supported by an able senior management team who work collaboratively in supporting and initiating improvements. The leadership team are slightly cautious in the self-evaluation of the school's performance although the majority of judgements are accurate. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection and the governing body continues to challenge and support the school in its desire to give the very best for all students and pupils.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The provision in the Bridge Unit (sixth form) is outstanding. The curriculum is enterprising and challenging because of the range of highly relevant courses that are available to meet the individual needs of students. Students are given outstanding guidance and support in completing accredited courses and developing the skills necessary to access future college places, work experience and employment opportunities. Staff work very effectively in leading students towards being extremely well prepared for adult life and transitions to post-school placements. There are very high expectations of students and they respond accordingly with maturity and determination. As one student proudly announced, 'I'm going to do a college course to become a receptionist, hopefully in this school'. Teaching is consistently very good

and the relationships between adults and students are outstanding and very influential in promoting an ambitious response from students who grow in confidence and self-esteem as a result. Leadership and management are outstanding and ensure that students have full access to appropriate work placements and are achieving very well both academically and in personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve students and pupils more in the assessment of their own learning.
- Use the full potential of ICT in teaching and learning.
- Make stronger links between individual progress targets and the aims of lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students and pupils achieve exceptionally well in communication skills, literacy and numeracy. They make excellent progress against challenging targets and are given very good support and advice about what to do next to achieve their targets. Progress is systematically tracked using a nationally recognised 'small step' approach. Results are analysed very carefully and all groups of students and pupils, including the most vulnerable, are making outstanding progress. Students and pupils make excellent progress in their personal development, particularly in their self-confidence and economic well-being because of the very good work-related and enterprise skills that they develop.

Students and pupils achieve very well in creative subjects such as music and art and in French because of the very structured ways in which these subjects are taught. They also achieve very well in PE because there is a strong emphasis on participating in outdoor activities and team games as well as completing a range of swimming awards. Students and pupils with complex communication and learning difficulties make exceptional progress, particularly when taught using specialist techniques that use sensory experiences, symbols and pictures to structure their learning activities. Pupils whose first language is not English make excellent progress through the excellent support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students and pupils make outstanding progress in their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The very positive ethos is underpinned with well established routines leading to students and pupils feeling very secure, safe and relaxed resulting in exemplary behaviour and total respect for each other. Overall attendance is satisfactory and most absences are linked to either medical issues or holidays abroad to visit members of their extended family. The structured reward system celebrates

students' and pupils' successes and is very effective in building and boosting their self-esteem. The extensive accreditations, such as Sportsmark, Activemark and Healthy Schools Standard, promote excellent attitudes towards healthy living. Students and pupils are very active in community activities and participate in a range of charity fundraising events, increasing their awareness of the needs of others and how they can make a positive contribution to helping them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching has many, significant strengths that result in excellent gains in learning. Specialist teaching techniques and resources are used very effectively in making learning exciting and capturing and sustaining pupils' interest and involvement. Teachers are enthusiastic and plan very carefully to ensure that everyone is fully included in the learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together in establishing a very positive learning climate with excellent levels of support. Pupils are frequently engaged in active, creative and collaborative tasks. In every lesson there is a clear expectation that learning will happen, children will enjoy themselves and individual targets will be met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum and its enrichment are outstanding. There is a wealth of opportunities for students and pupils to participate in and choice is central to their enjoyment of the curriculum. The excellent opportunities for work experience are enormously influential in motivating students, widening their horizons and raising their aspirations with the effect that there is a growing confidence and desire to experiment in new activities. The excellent links with partner organisations enable individuals to access a wider range of courses and offers them a very personal and relevant curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

This is a very safe and supportive school where pupils feel totally valued and respected. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are extremely thorough and this means that the most vulnerable or at risk pupils are given high quality personal attention. Child protection arrangements and those to ensure everyone's health, welfare and safety are in place. The guidance that individuals receive is extensive and all are made very aware of what their targets are and how they can achieve them. This means that pupils

do not feel overawed by the challenges they face and the support they receive helps them to be determined to do their best. Parents overwhelmingly feel that their children are well cared for and are very pleased with the high quality of education provided.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership in setting out a clear vision for the school and has an unswerving commitment to ensuring that students and pupils receive the highest quality of provision. She is very well supported by the senior leadership team who are outstanding role models in their teaching and monitoring positions. The high quality of leadership and management throughout the school means that staff feel a full part of a team that continues to strive for excellence and are undaunted by new challenges. The outcome is a staff team with high morale and high expectations resulting in a school with a good capacity to improve further.

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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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	3	
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	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	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	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

Newfield School

Old Bank Lane

Blackburn

Lancashire

BB1 2TW

18 January 2007

Dear Pupils and Students

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We were very impressed by your behaviour, attitude and willingness to work hard. You all seemed to enjoy school so much and were rightly very proud of your progress and achievements. The students in the Bridge Unit impressed me with their determination to be successful in all of their courses and we feel confident that you will all reap the rewards of your efforts. We quickly discovered from discussions and lesson observations that you are an ambitious group of young people who want to do your very best. We know that the staff at the school also want you to be successful and they are the main reason that you have such an excellent time at school. We agree with you that you go to a fantastic school where learning is fun and you have so many interesting things to do during the day.

Your school is outstanding because:

- the headteacher is an outstanding leader of an excellent staff
- staff have high expectations of you and you respond enthusiastically
- you are all treated as individuals
- you have fantastic opportunities to learn new and interesting things.

It is really important that you take full advantage of everything the school provides because then you will be able to achieve your ambitions.

We identified three things the school can do to get even better. The school can make better use of ICT, you can be involved more in the assessment of your own learning and lessons will make stronger links with your individual targets.

However, the most important thing is that you continue to be as positive and enthusiastic as you were last week. You all made us realise what CAN be achieved through hard work and determination.

John Atkinson (Lead inspector) and Stafford Evans.