

# Lincoln The Sincil School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131277
<b>Local Authority</b>	LINCOLNSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	295454
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Aldridge

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 special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	40
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Neville Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Rob Parkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	South Park Lincoln Lincolnshire LN5 8EW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01522 534559
<b>Fax number</b>	01522 536190

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school opened in April 2006 in a new building funded through the Private Finance Initiative. It caters for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. All have statements of special educational need and almost all are White British; they come from a variety of socio-economic circumstances from the city of Lincoln and north-west Lincolnshire. At present there are no Year 11 pupils. A small number of pupils are in public care. On entry to school, pupils have knowledge and skills well below those expected; they may have been out of education for up to two years, been excluded from mainstream schools or had a history of poor attendance. The school operates an extended day, starting with breakfast club in the morning and continuing after lessons with a range of activities, mainly away from the school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspection confirms that this is an effective school; it provides good value for money. The good leadership of the headteacher has ensured that a great deal has been achieved in a short time. The school's success is underpinned by good staff teamwork; all work hard to provide a good quality of education and care for the pupils. As a result, although standards are very low because of their learning difficulties, pupils achieve well and their personal development is good. Pupils improve their life chances by developing well their social skills, particularly by taking increasing responsibility for their behaviour. This is because the school has successful strategies for supporting pupils in improving their behaviour. Pupils value the points system, which links their performance during the school day to participation in extra-curricular activities. These activities are a great hit with the pupils and many provide good opportunities for physical exercise, thus encouraging healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy hugely the wide range of appealing opportunities, organised and planned mainly by support staff. The breakfast club and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions that provide a sense of belonging to a large family.

Teaching and learning are good. There has been some difficulty in recruiting teaching staff, but the school has overcome this by appointing suitable graduates as support staff and gradually developing their skills in teaching. Three will embark on teacher training courses in September. The professional development of staff has a high priority and staff appreciate the support that they receive from senior managers and colleagues in the day-to-day management of pupils. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in most lessons, and pupils have good attitudes to learning.

Leadership and management are good. Constructive links have been established with the community to enrich the curriculum and ensure that pupils have access to the support they need from external agencies. Parents and carers are kept well informed and treated as partners in the education process. Parents are positive about the school; one wrote that she wished she could send all her children to the school! The skills and expertise of members of staff are used well, and so is the school's good quality new building. Governance is satisfactory. The school has not been able to recruit a full complement of governors, and has correctly identified the need to provide further training for the group so that they can extend their role in checking first-hand the work of the school.

Staff know what the school does well, because self-evaluation is good. In particular, there are well developed systems to measure improvements in behaviour and attendance. Similar principles are being applied to the measurement of pupils' academic progress, although the school has a limited amount of assessment information because few pupils have been there for even a year yet. Nonetheless, suitable software is being put to work to enable the school to analyse the gains that pupils make. The school has not yet considered how it will compare its performance with other similar schools. Staff are reflective and constantly look for ways of improving what the school provides. The development plan, which runs over a one-year period, identifies all the right priorities, but does not show plans for longer-term development consistent with the headteacher's vision for the school as a centre of excellence. Nonetheless, its record so far shows the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Establish the practice of collecting and analysing data on pupils' progress and use this to compare performance with similar schools.

- Strengthen leadership and management by developing a long-term improvement plan for the school, recruiting a full complement of governors and ensuring that they are all aware of their roles and responsibilities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Boys and girls of all ages achieve well. Although standards remain well below average, pupils make good progress because they are taught well and given good quality support. Following assessment, pupils are set challenging individual targets and they achieve most of these within the timescale specified. Progress is clearly evident in lessons, when pupils work hard at tasks set and show good attitudes to learning. At present, because it is new, the school has little data to show the gains that pupils make. However, testing of reading and spelling ages has been carried out twice for some pupils, and remarkable gains have been made by some. These range from gains of one to six years in a seven-month period. Several pupils in Years 9 and 10 were entered for Entry Level examinations in English, mathematics and science recently, but these results are not yet available; neither are the results of this summer's Year 9 national tests. Although no whole-school targets were set for raising pupils' achievement in the school's first year, there are suitable plans to set targets for Years 9 and 11 in 2008, when the school will enter its first candidates for GCSE examinations.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The Sincil builds in recognition and celebration of improvements, so pupils' confidence and self-esteem grow. The well developed systems for encouraging, recognising and rewarding good behaviour are effective in improving pupils' behaviour, which is good in school and on visits and activities that take place off-site. However, a few pupils expressed concerns about bullying not being dealt with effectively. The level of fixed-term exclusions is typical of a school of this type. Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils attend well; so far this academic year, a fifth has 100% attendance. However, a small number with difficulties such as school phobia bring the overall figure down. Pupils show respect for staff, the building and displays, and adhere to the school's simple rules. They enjoy greatly the wide range of activities that are offered after lessons end, which motivates them to earn the points that allow access to these and other rewards. Physical activities are popular. Pupils steadily take responsibility for their behaviour, and for jobs at lunchtime; those selected to represent their peers as councillors take their responsibilities seriously. They have successfully lobbied for a cooked breakfast once a week and suggested ideas for fund raising and healthy break-time snacks. The acquisition of accreditation in core subjects, the emphasis on working together, and good opportunities to develop skills of cooperation ensure that pupils develop important skills that will serve them well in working life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The school's teaching and learning policy is faithfully implemented in lessons. For instance, learning objectives are shared with pupils and

written on the board as a reminder. This means that pupils are clear about what is expected. Almost all staff manage pupils well as they establish good relationships with them. Staff provide good quality support in lessons, so that pupils are encouraged to be independent in learning but not allowed to become frustrated. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in classes; pupils accept that they are in school to learn and this contributes to the good progress they make in lessons. When planning lessons, teachers endeavour to meet individual needs mainly by deploying staff to support those that need it. They also plan different tasks, but occasionally the work is not quite challenging enough for the most able pupils. The 'three-part lesson' is well established and teachers review objectives with pupils at the end of each lesson; staff also review pupils' performance and award points for behaviour and effort. In the best examples, the teacher skilfully weaves into the review an evaluation of how well pupils have progressed with individual targets and involves pupils in self-assessment too.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum. The extended day allows for extensive enrichment of the curriculum. On four evenings each week, pupils who have earned sufficient points can choose from a wide range of appealing and popular activities ranging from canoeing to Young Firefighters. These are well planned, organised and run by members of the support staff, so that learning is maximised. For instance, kite flying aims to develop skills of coordination and cooperation. There are also visits to places of interest, such as the Space Centre.

The curriculum meets broad requirements, and the school improvement plan recognises the need to provide opportunities for enterprise activity. Opportunities for accreditation are being added to all the time, as are those for college taster courses and work based learning. A good quality programme of personal, social and health education guides pupils in making safe and healthy choices. The curriculum meets the needs described on pupils' statements well, particularly through supplementary programmes in literacy, numeracy, social skills and anger management. Plans are well advanced for an options system in September for Years 10 and 11, which will create a personal learning pathway for each pupil made up of academic and vocational courses combined with workplace learning. This has been made possible by quickly establishing effective links within the community.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect of the school's work is good. Support and guidance extend to parents too, as the school offers positive parenting courses. Consistently applied whole-school systems ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and they get a great deal of feedback through the points system. They value the certificates and rewards that they earn for good behaviour and attendance. Supervision is good and all staff are trained in techniques of managing pupils who lose control. Each pupil is assigned a key worker, who provides personal support and communication with parents and carers. Whilst parents and carers feel well informed, a few pupils would like more time to talk to their key workers. Effective communication ensures that staff know of pupils' changing moods and circumstances and can support those who are going through a bad patch. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. A member of staff with experience and expertise in child protection matters oversees this and coordinates support for pupils in public care. All pupils have academic and behavioural targets; they know what these are and their progress in improving attendance and behaviour is carefully monitored.

Pupils' progress in those areas that are of most importance to individuals is monitored well through individual education plans, and annual reviews involve pupils, parents and other professionals.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has successfully developed a strong staff team, and he provides good leadership by setting the tone for the school. The difficulty of recruiting suitable teaching staff is being successfully overcome by the school 'growing its own'. Staff feel well supported in developing their skills and in managing pupils. They find that the senior management team is always ready to help.

Leadership and management roles are widely shared and all staff play their part in monitoring and evaluation; this is written into their job descriptions. There are good arrangements for reviewing performance of teaching and support staff. The deputy headteacher leads well on analysis of information on behaviour and attendance. However, the school has not yet planned how it will compare its overall performance with similar schools.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a suitable committee structure and each committee has clear terms of reference. The curriculum committee has established links with subject leaders and presentations have been made to this group by the English and mathematics subject leaders. However, few governors visit the school to check first-hand on its work, and the school improvement plan formally recognises the need to do this and to provide governor training.

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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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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	NA

### 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	3
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

<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.

## Annex A

**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	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	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

29 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Sincil School, Lincoln, LN5 8EW

Thank you for making me welcome in your school, particularly to those of you that spoke to me about school life and looked after me at breakfast and lunchtime. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit. As you know, I came to see how well you are all getting on and whether there is anything that needs to be done to make the school even better. I am pleased to say that yours is a good school and you should all be proud of how much has been achieved in the year since it opened.

Mr Parkin and the staff work well together as a team, and they are successful in helping all of you to improve your behaviour and make academic progress. The extended school day works well. Breakfast gives you all a healthy start to the day and you told me how much you all enjoy the range of activities on offer at the end of lessons. I was impressed with the way the points system works; it is helping you to improve in many ways. The celebration assembly showed me how much you are all achieving. I enjoyed the lessons I saw too; you were all working hard and the calm atmosphere helped you to concentrate and make good progress. Teaching is good. The staff support you well in lessons and I was pleased to see that you all know what your individual targets are. The staff also care for you well; it is a good idea to have a key worker for each of you and the school also works closely with your parents and carers. They are pleased with what the school does for you.

The staff know what they need to do to improve the school. They need to collect information on the academic progress you are making and use this to see how well your school is doing compared with other similar schools. To help support improvements they need to write a plan that extends over about three years, recruit more governors and make sure that all governors are trained to carry out their roles. You can do your bit by making sure that you attend as well as you possibly can. I wish you all well in the future.

Mrs Sue Aldridge Lead inspector