

Warren School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124905
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	301322
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Naylor

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	100
6th form	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr H Quitenton
Headteacher	Mr C Moore
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2003
School address	Clarkes Lane Oulton Broad Lowestoft Suffolk NR33 8HT
Telephone number	01502 561893
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Age group	3–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Warren School teaches pupils with severe or complex learning disabilities or difficulties. A few pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. Pupils are drawn from a large area of northern Suffolk. Attainment on entry varies according to individual circumstances but is generally significantly below anticipated levels for their chronological age. There are twice as many boys as girls. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Warren School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall although some do better. They have particular success in their personal development, growing in confidence and self-esteem and becoming more independent in their social skills. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they have acquired some success in nationally recognised accreditation. Parents say they are pleased with the progress their children make. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has used the good support from officers of the local authority successfully to steer the school through a period of uncertainty and difficulty. Issues concerning staffing absences have now been addressed. A new deputy headteacher was seconded to the school in September 2006 and confirmed in the permanent post in January 2007. This has led to a strengthening of the senior management team. As a result there has been a positive impact upon the work of the school, with a firmer direction given to a series of initiatives for improvement to the curriculum, assessment and pupil performance. Roles and responsibilities within the senior management team and for subject leaders are being adjusted to reflect the identified development needs of the school. The school governors have also recently undergone a transformation in relation to levels of membership. This boost is reflected in their support of the school and commitment to it. However, the headteacher and governors recognise that more work remains to be done to secure the overall effectiveness of the school leadership. In particular, systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum are not established, especially for the middle managers and subject leaders. This lessens the impact of teaching and the curriculum upon pupils' learning because it reduces teacher's understanding of how they can improve the quality of pupils' learning.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well and know the specific needs of the pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory and has a range of activities and opportunities to promote learning. In particular good emphasis is placed upon pupils' personal development, which is good up to age 16, and as a result, pupils are aware of the need to keep themselves safe. They are especially successful at taking part in activities such as sports that keep them healthy. They also willingly take part in activities which support their school and the wider community. Social moral, spiritual and cultural development are good and promoted well through the good programme for personal social and health education (PSHE). Pupils are generally prepared satisfactorily for the next stage in their education. The leadership has not yet fully established procedures for ensuring a whole school approach to curriculum development but is currently working towards this.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The quality of care and support for pupils' well-being is good, although guidance and support in relation to pupils' learning and progress is satisfactory because there is no coordinated system for measuring or tracking the performance of individuals or groups of pupils over time.

The leadership of the school, together with governors, has introduced satisfactory procedures for supporting school self-evaluation. Most of the issues from the last inspection have been addressed, for example information and communication technology (ICT) is now used effectively to support learning across the school. The issue of making improvements to the curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 19 has been resolved satisfactorily for pupils aged 14 to 16. However, the

curriculum in the further education department does not provide access to accreditation. Capacity to improve and improvements since the last inspection are therefore satisfactory.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the further education department are sound. Students make satisfactory progress. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Personal development is satisfactory. A range of activities is provided to promote learning and they are prepared soundly for the future through work related learning. However, they have limited access to accreditation and limited opportunities to further promote their skills of independence. There is good pastoral support, with staff working cooperatively and establishing good relationships with students. Students enjoy their learning; behaviour and attitudes are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels so that it involves middle managers and school governors in the monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and of the curriculum.
- Introduce a comprehensive system for collecting and analysing information about pupil performance.
- Extend the system of accreditation to students in further education.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory and often good progress in their communication and social skills in the Foundation Stage. The work seen in lessons, pupils' books and their records of achievement shows that pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in Key Stage 2 and 3 in English, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress and have gained success in Accreditation of Life and Living Skills at the introductory level in Communication, ICT, Numeracy, and home management courses. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties do not always make the progress they should due to a lack of challenge in teaching. Most pupils at each key stage make good progress in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Students in further education make satisfactory progress overall. They successfully participate in work-experience placements, mainly within the school but a few manage external placements. Most pupils make outstanding progress in swimming and physical education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school and participating in their lessons. This is shown by their very good attendance. Members of the school council feel that their school is a safe place. They

help to draw up school rules to make sure all pupils feel safe and are free from bullying. The members listen to the views of others in their class and make sure they speak out for them at meetings. Pupils generally behave well and relationships are good. They have a very positive attitude to their work and are proud of their achievements. There are many examples of older pupils helping younger ones through a special advocacy scheme. Some pupils act as sports leaders for younger pupils and set a good example to them. Pupils become increasingly aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy excellent opportunities to develop their physical abilities and self-confidence through a range of sporting, swimming and leisure activities in which they participate during lessons, at lunch-time and in after-school clubs. Pupils help to raise funds for charitable causes and take part in community projects such as the garden project. Students in further education successfully learn about the world beyond school through their work experience and college placements, which prepares them well for the future. However, they make only satisfactory progress in their personal development largely because they are denied opportunities for accreditation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons pupils learn effectively because of the thorough planning done by the teacher. Activities and learning resources to be used are given very careful consideration, for example in providing pupils with many visual aids and other resources that spark their interest. This stimulates good efforts and a fast pace to learning. Much use is made of interactive whiteboards but this is most effective when pupils are actively involved. While teaching assistants are in general an effective team supporting pupils' learning, they are most effective when they are working to lesson objectives that are crystal clear.

The good practice found in the best teaching is not being spread effectively across the school. This is because teaching and learning are not being monitored and evaluated rigorously enough by leaders. Teachers and teaching assistants build up a reasonable understanding of pupils' learning needs through regular assessment. This helps in planning work that approximately matches pupils' different capabilities. However, assessment practice is not consistent and at its weakest it is not systematic enough. The absence of a means of tracking pupils' performance, and their small steps of progress in particular, means teachers are often unable to plan what pupils should learn with sufficient precision. The teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is sometimes inadequate because appropriate learning opportunities are not planned clearly enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is sound, providing pupils with a sufficiently broad range of work and activities. Excellent opportunities are presented in sports and art. Much of the work pupils do is planned well in advance and is often detailed. However, planning is not always co-ordinated well across the school because until quite recently, the overall development of the curriculum has not been a high priority. As a result, there is a lack of imaginative approaches to learning that are sharply

focused on what pupils need to learn. There are opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to gain accreditation, but this does not extend to students in further education. In general, the curriculum is suited to pupils' different learning difficulties and disabilities. However, there is some inconsistency in planning appropriate learning opportunities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is good provision for developing pupils' communication skills, using signing and symbols. PSHE is effective in promoting pupils' independence and the Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' personal needs. They organise carefully what is required to ensure each pupil's physical, emotional and medical needs are met. Pupils' health and safety are given a high priority and staff are trained to use all the appropriate methods for keeping pupils safe. Links with a range of external agencies supporting pupils and their families are good. The Health Authority's provision for physiotherapy, speech and language therapy at the school has reduced recently but staff use the guidance and expertise of health workers to good effect to support pupils' physical development and communication. Child protection procedures are in place and the school meets government requirements with regard to safeguarding children. The school supports pupils' preparation for the future satisfactorily, in particular with an emphasis on building their self-confidence and independence. However, assessment is not always used consistently to promote effective learning and progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Sound leadership is ensuring that the school is moving forward. A particular success of the school's leadership has been the development and training provided for teaching assistants so that they now are a valued, well trained and a skilled part of the school's work force. The school development plan has been revised and is rightly regarded and used as a strong supporting component for guiding the future strategic direction of the school. However, not enough emphasis is placed on using the skills and expertise of subject leaders and middle managers in evaluating and monitoring the curriculum or the quality of teaching and learning. This limits the school in its ability to bring about even faster improvement. Governors, including those new to the role, are keen to support the school but they are not yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluating its work. The school finances are well managed by the school business manager.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

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?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	3
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	1	
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?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	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	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

4 July 2007

Dear Pupils and Students

Inspection of Warren School, Lowestoft, NR33 8HT

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome that you gave to Mr Lemon and I when we visited your school this week. We enjoyed being with you in lessons. Thank you for showing us your work. We could tell that you are very proud of all the many things that you achieve.

We think that you work very hard. Your behaviour is good and you get on with one another very well. We especially like the way that you help one another. You know how to keep yourselves safe. We admire the way that you join in lots of physical activities to keep yourselves healthy. The successes that you enjoy in physical education and swimming are terrific! We are pleased that some of the older pupils amongst you are gaining awards in your life skills work. Well done to you all!

The headteacher and all the staff work very hard to make sure that you make progress in your learning and are safe and happy.

We told the headteacher that there are a few things that could be improved to make the school even better.

- The headteacher and senior teachers, with the help of the governors, need to work together even harder. In particular they need to check how well teaching helps you to learn.
- Teachers need to measure how much each of you has learned each year so that they know what to teach you next.
- Students in further education need to have the chance to gain national awards in life skills.

We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Naylor Inspector