

The Loyne School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119892
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	301667
Inspection date	3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	77
6th form	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Ann-Marie Houghton
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Sefton Drive Lancaster Lancashire LA1 2PZ
Telephone number	01524 64543
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Loyne is a school for pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties. Many pupils also have autistic spectrum disorders. In many instances, pupils have additional multiple and complex learning difficulties. The school has grown considerably in recent years. Nearly all pupils are White British. The family backgrounds of pupils are broadly representative of the wide area from which pupils are drawn. Just over a third are entitled to free school meals and twelve are looked after by the local authority. Boys outnumber girls by about two-to-one, which is not unusual for schools such as this.

The school refers to its sixth form as 'Further Education'.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Loyne is a stunning school. It gives excellent value for money and is outstandingly successful in changing pupils' lives for the better. Excellent leadership, management and governance have brought about improvements across the board since the previous inspection and put the school in an enviable position to maintain its place at the forefront of education and care, not just locally, but also nationally. This is because it openly shares its expertise in helping pupils with learning difficulties through an enormously effective range of support and advice for local schools and articles in national journals. All of this is built on the back of ensuring that all pupils make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development. They do so because of amazingly strong teaching and a quality of care that is wonderful in its quality and effectiveness.

Most children enter the Nursery at the very earliest stages of learning and personal development. Throughout the exceptionally well led, managed and taught Foundation Stage, they make excellent progress in all areas of learning. When the time comes for transfer to Year 1, nearly all of them have far exceeded the standard found in similar schools.

As could be expected, nearly all parents are thrilled by their children's progress and the school's success. The Loyne is held in the highest esteem by the local authority, by schools in the area and by the many outside agencies that have awarded it an abundance of locally and nationally recognised accolades. This has culminated in the attainment of Specialist School status (Cognition and Learning) from September 2007. This gives it the platform to further extend and develop its highly innovative working partnerships with other schools and agencies, spread its positive influence and further promote the achievement of pupils.

Pupils love the school. They attend whenever they can, work hard and show an enormous degree of consideration and understanding of each other's difficulties. On top of this, their behaviour is outstanding. All of these factors combine to create an extremely happy and safe environment and strong sense of community, in which all pupils can thrive and be prepared for the best possible futures. Meticulous attention to pupils' emotional health, as well as their physical development, contributes enormously to the outstanding way in which pupils develop an awareness of the importance of keeping healthy in spirit, mind and body.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The further education department is outstanding. It is exceptionally well led and managed and teaching is outstanding. The department has benefited from excellent improvements in accommodation since the previous inspection. These have contributed enormously to the creation of an environment in which students develop independence and responsibility for themselves. Excellent opportunities are generated to introduce students to the world of work and the possibilities of continuing their education in college when the time comes to leave. The realisation that increasing numbers of relatively higher attaining students are transferring to The Loyne from other schools at the end of Year 11 has led to a prompt revision of the curriculum to ensure that their needs are met, particularly by broadening the range of accreditation available to them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build rapidly on current planning to capitalise on the new openings created by the gaining of Specialist School status and thus further its influence on inclusion initiatives locally and nationally.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. The nature of their difficulties means they cannot meet the expectations for pupils in mainstream schools. Instead, progress is measured against individual targets and expectations which are met with an exceptional degree of success. A combination of extremely skilled staff, outstanding assessment procedures and excellent communication with parents and other agencies ensures that these targets and expectations are always challenging, yet achievable. Frequent reviews ensure that when targets are met they are replaced with slightly more advanced ones, allowing the progress of pupils to be very carefully monitored.

Most children are admitted to the Nursery at the very earliest stages of learning. Many have virtually no form of communication. Nearly all make progress that exceeds expectations. From this positive start, pupils make outstanding progress as they move through the school, benefiting from outstanding teaching and a wonderful curriculum. This ensures that pupils achieve highly in a huge variety of subjects, activities and situations. At no age does progress slow and there is no difference in the achievements of different groups of pupils, including those looked after by the local authority, because staff are equally skilled in meeting all needs.

The progress of a few pupils is barely measurable using conventional means because of the profound nature of their learning difficulties. However, the school is well able to demonstrate how exceptionally well their ability to make choices and communicate their needs improves. By the time other pupils leave, many are working in the early levels of the National Curriculum. Their achievements are confirmed and celebrated with all students gaining nationally recognised awards for communication, including 'Accreditation for Life and Living' and 'National Skills Profile', both awarded by Oxford, Cambridge and RSA examinations (OCR).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Excellent spiritual development is clearly evident in the way pupils develop good consciences based on an understanding of their own and other pupils' feelings. These contribute enormously to the uplifting atmosphere found in school. Excellent social and moral development manifests itself in extremely good behaviour and consideration for others. Pupils' care of others younger, smaller or less able than themselves shines through, showing how acutely aware they are of being important parts of a small, happy and safe community in which individual views and actions matter. Pupils attend whenever they can because they enjoy school and appreciate the huge range of learning and recreational opportunities provided for by the outstanding curriculum. Pupils gain an outstanding understanding of their own and other peoples' cultures and communities. This was witnessed during the inspection as pupils took part in stimulating and exciting activities linked to the

theme of 'China'. Most pupils participate energetically and enthusiastically in exercise and tend to choose healthy options when given a choice for lunches or snacks. Excellent attention is paid to promoting the emotional health of pupils, especially at those times when they are facing confusion or distress. All pupils are helped to expand their emotional vocabulary and to express their feelings; for instance, pupils with very limited powers of communication are helped to express their feelings through the use of symbols. The combination of outstanding achievement and personal development stands pupils in excellent stead for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

It is a rare privilege to witness such outstanding teaching as is found at The Loyne. Excellent practice is firmly embedded. The outcomes of monitoring and inspection point to most teaching being excellent and anything less than good being almost unheard of. This, coupled with pupils' great enthusiasm for learning, underpins their outstanding progress. One of many strengths of teaching is the way pupils are helped to do as much as possible for themselves. Teachers can do this with confidence because their excellent assessment of pupils' progress gives them a detailed understanding of what individuals are capable of. Lessons are then meticulously planned with a clear focus on what pupils will learn rather than what teachers will teach. Staff teams work expertly and closely with highly skilled teaching assistants. They contribute invaluable support to teachers and pupils alike. Lessons are frequently characterised by a wide range of activities, all sufficiently related to a central theme, yet different enough to maintain pupils' interests and make learning exciting. Staff share many enhanced skills; for instance, in teaching pupils with Autism or with profound and multiple learning difficulties. These skills help ensure that the needs of all pupils are equally well met and that all can learn to the best of their ability.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It engages all pupils equally, meets all statutory requirements and is wonderfully enriched with a huge variety of activities, which extend pupils' learning and personal development opportunities well beyond the classroom and the standard school day. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is at the heart of the curriculum. It stands alongside numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) as the bedrock on which other learning opportunities build. The creative curriculum, including the performing arts, is outstanding and has been recognised nationally by the award of Arts Mark Gold. The school also holds Sportsmark and Activemark awards. A huge range of visitors contributes to raising pupils' cultural and multicultural awareness. Exciting visits to places as far afield as France, London and Edinburgh, often incorporating overnight stays strongly promote learning and personal skills and extend pupils' horizons. Older learners are particularly well prepared for adult life through extensive work based opportunities, which help them realise the opportunities available for them in the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding in every respect. Staff are totally committed to ensuring that pupils stay safe, healthy and well protected. Great care is taken to involve parents as much as possible in making important decisions about their children's futures. Many of the school's systems for offering care, guidance and support to pupils extend equally to parents and a host of children from other schools who attend The Loyne for parts of their education. Innovative resource packages have been developed so that other schools and parents can benefit from the expertise of Loyne staff. Excellent assessment of pupils' needs and progress provides comprehensive information to teachers and a host of other professionals to help them ensure that each individual's personal, physical and learning needs are met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Excellent leadership and management, coupled with dedicated and highly effective governance, have driven the school to the pinnacle of success. There is not a shred of complacency, just an enormous determination to maintain a drive for improvement through constant self-evaluation of the highest quality and an extensive programme of ambitious training for staff. In every aspect of its work, the school keeps fine-tuning provision. Nothing major ever needs changing, but minor changes never stop happening. This lends a strong air of stability to the school and allows staff to develop many enhanced skills to use to the benefit of pupils' learning and development. The professional approach of all staff in their leadership and management roles, coupled with their pride and enthusiasm for working at The Loyne ensures that morale is exceptionally high. Two years ago, when the workforce had to be remodelled, in line with legislation for all schools, managers set to with their usual thoroughness and gained a Learning Excellence Award for best practice. The school has a well-deserved reputation for excellence in teaching and learning and teachers are regularly involved in local authority initiatives to demonstrate and share best practice in other schools. The Loyne has received national recognition for the excellence with which staff use ICT to support learning (Bringing Educational Creativity To All (BECTA) Excellence Award).

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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>	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	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
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	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	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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.

Annex A

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	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Loyne School, Lancashire, LA1 2PZ

I visited your school the other day to have a look around, see what was good and make a few suggestions about what could be improved.

You were wonderful. Thanks for your welcome and for playing your part in what was a truly memorable experience.

It's my job to make judgements about how good schools are. When I see something outstanding I give it a '1', anything good gets a '2', satisfactory a '3' and so on. The No. 1 key on my computer is glowing. It had to be pressed 53 times. This left the other numbers unused. That's never happened to me before.

That means that The Loyne is a truly magnificent school in every respect. You could not hope to make better progress, be better taught or to be better cared for.

The bit about suggesting improvements was slightly difficult so I left with the suggestion that The Loyne should be used as an example to other schools all over the country so that their pupils can benefit from all the things that you do. I hope you'll be proud of your part in this.

Good luck for the future.

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector