

West Lea School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102067
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	307890
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	89
6th form	4
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Knights
Headteacher	Mrs A Fox
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
School address	Haselbury Road Edmonton London N9 9TU
Telephone number	020 8807 2656
Fax number	020 8803 5203

Age group	4-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

West Lea School provides for pupils who have statements of special educational needs for a range of difficulties. They include, medical and physical difficulties, communication difficulties, social, emotional and learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairment and pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Pupils come from a variety of social and economical backgrounds and a small number come from other London boroughs. Just over a half of pupils are from white British families with the remainder coming from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds with no one dominant group. Currently there is only one pupil who is looked after by the local authority. There are currently no children in the Foundation Stage. The school has achieved a range of recognized awards, including Healthy Schools, Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSIS) and Sportsmark and is working towards the Leading Parent Partnership Award. An outreach service provides support to mainstream schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school offers a good education for all of its pupils, and both their well-being and achievement are central to everything it does. As a result, pupils respond positively by showing outstanding attitudes to their learning, making good academic progress, and outstanding progress in their personal development. Leadership and management are good and are effectively shared across the school with the individual strengths of staff being efficiently maximized. This ensures the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis. The very positive learning environment created successfully motivates all pupils to try their very best. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'My child has only been at the school for a year, but has already progressed 100% in both her academic work and in her social skills.' There are outstanding partnerships with support agencies, schools, colleges and the community, ensuring pupils' needs and well-being are very well met. Outreach support for pupils and staff in mainstream schools is very well received and appreciated.

Pupils' standards vary widely, but overall are well below the national average. Pupils are now entering the school with an increasingly complex range of learning and medical difficulties. They get a positive start to school life and begin to make a marked improvement in their confidence, communication and social skills. Before leaving the school many pupils achieve a range of grades in their GCSE examinations and others achieve entry level examinations and vocational courses. Standards of artwork by some pupils are in line with those achieved by mainstream pupils. Pupils learn skills that help them effectively prepare for life after school. Given their starting points, and the nature of their learning difficulties, pupils' achievement and progress are good. This success gives them social confidence and enables them to make choices and develop their independent learning. Challenging targets are set, which most pupils successfully achieve. Pupils' good progress is undoubtedly due to excellent relationships, outstanding care, support and guidance, the relevant curriculum and the good teaching and excellent support they receive for their individual needs. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The tracking, recording and analysis of pupils' progress have very effectively developed and clearly identify any underachievement in pupils' learning. Effective support strategies ensure all pupils are able to make equally good rates of progress. However, some teachers use the information on pupils' progress better than others to plan and deliver appropriately challenging, individual learning activities.

The school is aware of the continued need to adapt the relevancy and challenge within the curriculum in view of the increasing complexity of pupils' medical and learning needs. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development, and community visits, work in mainstream schools and visiting specialists effectively support their learning. Vocational and enterprise skills are developed and there are opportunities for work related learning as pupils get older. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards each other, showing empathy and understanding for each other's differences. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say that lessons are their favourite aspect of the school. Monitoring and self-evaluation strategies effectively identify necessary improvements, but do not sufficiently involve all of the school community. For example, teaching assistants, therapists and pupils. Governors are very well informed and play an increasing part in monitoring, self-evaluation and in the strategic management of the school. This demonstrates good improvement since the last inspection. Parents are regularly consulted on school improvement and the school is aware of the need to ensure there is effective ongoing communication with

homes. Leadership and management are having a very positive impact on provision, which is enabling all pupils to achieve and make continued good progress. The capacity to improve further is good. A parent said, 'My son cannot wait to get to school' and his answer to the move to West Lea was, 'Mum, we made the right choice'.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision is continually being reviewed to ensure it continues to meet the changing needs of incoming students. Students study a programme of practical life-skills and have good and increasing access to appropriate activities, work-related opportunities and accredited courses. Their increasing maturity and confidence is enabling progressive independence and the school effectively prepares them for life after school. There is excellent guidance and support for students' next steps and the school is aware of the need to ensure there is progression and challenge waiting for those students who go on to attend further education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers consistently use available data on pupils' progress to plan and deliver challenging learning activities for all pupils.
- Ensure that monitoring and self evaluation processes involve the whole school community.
- Ensure the curriculum continues to develop and adapt to meet the increasingly complex learning needs of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' academic progress throughout the school is good and is very effectively supported by their sheer joy of learning. Pupils are eager to fully participate in all activities and support in lessons makes it clear what they need to do to improve. Pupils are particularly pleased with the progress they make in their reading and communication. One pupil said, 'I could not read before I came to this school. Now I take books home to read.' Pupils learn practical applications in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and skills to support everyday living. Pupils learn essential personal and social skills that fully support their citizenship development. A small number of pupils reintegrate into mainstream schools and others mainly achieve their full potential before leaving school with a range of relevant qualifications to continue their education in local colleges.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

As pupils move through the school they rapidly grow in confidence and self esteem. Pupils learn to understand all aspects of keeping healthy and they make healthy choices from the nutritious meals at lunchtime, and engage in the wide range of sporting activities on offer. Their extremely positive attitudes are reflected in their good attendance, outstanding behaviour and in their enthusiasm for learning in all lessons. Pupils' relationships with staff and each other are outstanding with mutual respect shown at all times. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their community through a variety of fund-raising events, through the work of

the school council, and by helping and supporting each other. As one pupil said, 'Everything here is brilliant and I would not change a thing. I have lots of friends and now I can read.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teachers know pupils very well and most use this information to help pupils learn. This results in pupils making good progress in lessons. However, not all teachers are consistently using pupils' progress data to plan and personalise progressive and challenging learning activities. Classroom practice is regularly monitored and good support is given to improve individual practice. Relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding and promote a very positive learning environment, which encourages pupils to do their best. A parent said, 'My child has been taught exceptionally well and independence is actively encouraged. He can be himself.' Helpful ongoing feedback and support in lessons by teachers and effective teaching assistants ensures pupils know how they can improve. Excellent teamwork and effective use of resources, particularly interactive whiteboards and ICT, positively supports pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum effectively supports pupils' good academic and outstanding personal development. There are good opportunities to enrich pupils' learning, through a wide range of school visits, after school activities and through attendance in mainstream schools whenever relevant. These all very effectively promote pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Key Stage leaders try to ensure that planning is relevant to pupils' needs and skills are built up progressively from year to year. Leaders are aware of the need to continually adapt the curriculum to meet the changing needs of pupils. Excellent links with schools and colleges very positively support pupils' academic and personal development. For example, a visiting mainstream teacher works with committed school staff to take a drama group of enthusiastic pupils for a school production. The emphasis on the key skills in communication, literacy, numeracy, social skills, and ICT, impacts very positively on pupils' progress and their preparation for life after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Efficient and consistent school procedures and practice keep pupils safe and secure, while promoting their independent learning. This results in confident pupils with positive attitudes. The well-attended breakfast club provides an excellent start to the day and clearly demonstrates the outstanding relationships between staff and pupils. The very effective planning and teamwork between senior staff, teaching assistants, nurse, therapists and teachers ensure pupils' personal needs are very well met. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and carefully monitored to ensure their well-being. The great majority of parents report that communication between home and school is excellent. A parent wrote, 'I feel any of my concerns are listened to and the school works with me. I have every confidence in the school.' It is made clear to

pupils in lessons how they may improve and they receive very effective guidance on future opportunities. The transition into the sixth form or college is very carefully planned and supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The experienced headteacher and senior staff have very effectively led the school through a series of improvements since the last inspection, which promotes high quality care and education. All staff are consistent in their dedication to, and pastoral care of, the pupils. The impact of their work is clearly seen in the outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils and the good academic and outstanding personal progress they make. Clear expectations are made of staff, their hard work is appreciated and morale is positive. Professional development and training is readily available and promotes personal development and helps meet the changing needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants are effectively led and managed and make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and well-being. The school has worked hard to overcome the limitations of its accommodation and has successfully minimalised its effect upon pupils' achievement. The local authority has approved a new build for the very near future.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
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?	2	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	2	
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

30 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Lea School, London, N9 9TU

Thank you for making my visit to your school such a pleasurable one. I really enjoyed meeting you. A special thanks must go to those pupils in the school council who met with me and told me all about the school. I must not forget those pupils I met during break time and who made me smile with their wicked sense of humour. You are all excellent representatives of your school, being polite, very well behaved and friendly. You get on very well together and really enjoy coming to school. I agree with you and your parents that your school is good and helps you to do your very best. I think that you make good progress in your work and excellent progress in your personal development. All staff work really well together to make sure you get the extra help you may need. You too can help by keeping a close watch on your targets and working as hard as you can to achieve them. I particularly liked that:

- you learn to do things for yourself and you consider the needs of others
- you thoroughly enjoy your lessons and work very hard to improve
- you learn to be healthy and safe
- you like to take responsibility and you very effectively support your community
- you really like the clubs, after school activities and the breakfast club
- you learn useful skills that will help you when you leave school
- the school works very effectively with other people to ensure you receive the support you need
- the school is very well led and managed and it has your very best interests at heart.

There are some areas that the school can improve upon. They are:

- to use the information on your progress so that all lessons provide you with challenging activities that ensure you make the best possible progress
- to involve the whole school in checking how well the school is doing
- to ensure the curriculum continues to develop and adapt to effectively meet your different needs.

It was a delight being in your school and I wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely,

M J Smith

Lead Inspector