

Longford Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106392
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	309113
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Arif Hussain

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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Eddie Kelson
Headteacher	Mrs Beverley Owens
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
School address	Longford Park Stretford Manchester M32 8PR
Telephone number	0161 912 1895
Fax number	0161 912 1896

Age group	5-11
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Inspection number	309113

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some pupils also have more complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is a school for pupils who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. The nature of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that they are working at standards that are below average. Most have a statement of special educational need. Around 20% of the pupils are girls. While pupils are mainly from a White British heritage, around 15% are from different minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. Around 45% have free school meals. The school has gained the Sports Activemark and the National Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Representative views from parents include, 'My child now uses the words 'happy' and 'school' in the same sentence'. The school deserves its very strong reputation in the community. It is appreciated both for its work with its own pupils and for the excellence of its work with other schools. The local authority also has a very high regard for the school, saying, for example, 'that it can be relied upon to help pupils across Trafford for short or long periods'. A very wide range of links with welfare and support agencies make an excellent contribution to personal development.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well partly because they are encouraged to want to learn. Pupils are treated as individuals and the praise and reward they are given for their achievements raises their self-esteem very effectively. The school values its pupils thoroughly. Parents made a point of saying how much they like the letters sent home which talk glowingly about their children's achievements. Procedures to safeguard pupils are firmly in place and policies are regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are safe and healthy. The school provides exceptional care, guidance and support.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is sometimes outstanding. Teachers know how to motivate pupils very well. This results in pupils developing excellent attitudes towards learning and so they engage well in lessons. The school has established a good curriculum that is rich and imaginative, and that meets pupils' needs effectively. Literacy and numeracy provision is generally good and this helps to prepare pupils well for their economic future. Overall standards in English have risen since the last inspection although writing has not improved quite as much as reading. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in a broad range of subjects are not fully in place

Personal development is exceptional. The level of self-discipline that pupils develop is very impressive and improvement in behaviour is outstanding. Pupils quickly develop into well mannered and thoughtful young citizens. They have an excellent understanding of healthy living. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to their community, including through the school council, and their suggestions have led to many school improvements. Attendance is excellent. All pupils have greatly improved their attendance since joining the school.

Leadership and management are good at all levels. The headteacher's relentless drive for pupils to achieve well, and to benefit from maintaining very close links with mainstream schools, has been instrumental in the school's success. Her excellent leadership has also led to a common sense of purpose. Senior staff have established effective and rigorous target-setting systems across school. The curriculum is moving from strength to strength. The school has identified the most important key skills in all subjects which it wants pupils to develop. However, this approach is relatively new and the school acknowledges it has yet to analyse fully its impact on standards. The governing body is very supportive. It holds the school to account well and has vigorously pursued improvements in outdoor accommodation. The school has addressed effectively the issues raised at the last inspection. Its capacity for further improvement and the value for money it provides are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Check fully on the effectiveness of the school's key skills curriculum and ensure that it impacts on raising standards further.

- Develop more opportunities for writing across the curriculum in order to raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement in English and mathematics is good, while it is very good in science and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils especially enjoy the practical opportunities in science and ICT and this has been an important factor in their achievements in these subjects. The school's emphasis on promoting a love of books has resulted in good progress in reading. Progress in writing is not quite as good. Challenging targets have been met across the school to a high degree. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers because of the effective support they receive for their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' remarkable improvements in personal development make an excellent contribution to learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils learn to relate to others particularly well and develop exceptional teamwork skills. They express admirable views about discrimination, saying, for example, 'Everyone should be treated equally and judged on their merits.' They recognise the right of individuals to practise their religion and value the rich diversity of cultures in society. This produces an exceptionally strong community spirit. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem and they are confident that adults are caring and supportive if they have any worries. Parents confirm that their children are managed especially well and that their behaviour has improved considerably while at the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking exercise through sports and make very sensible choices about what they eat. A measure of pupils' excellent all-round personal development can be seen in the good number of pupils who return to their mainstream schools ready to benefit from their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors observed good and occasionally outstanding teaching. Strengths include the use of computers as a tool for learning in many subjects and teaching that grabs pupils' interest. Consequently, pupils are engaged well in learning and achieve well. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' learning difficulties and know how to motivate them. Support assistants make an excellent contribution to the success of lessons because of the support they offer individual pupils. An outstanding music lesson for Key Stage 2 pupils included all these factors. Pupils achieved very well in terms of music and developed their social skills exceptionally well as they played various instruments together harmoniously. Assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The information collected is well used to plan lessons and ensure that challenging targets are met. Although marking tells pupils how well they are doing, opportunities are sometimes missed to tell them about the next steps to take in order to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a wide variety of enjoyable learning opportunities that are matched well to individual needs. Personal, social and health education is exceptional and is woven into all aspects of the curriculum. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities include sports clubs, gardening, cooking and special weeks of activities which enrich the curriculum. A good number of educational visits to places of interest such as museums and art galleries make a significant contribution to cultural development. A strong musical tradition adds to pupils' enjoyment and group performances help them to develop cooperative skills. However, although provision to develop basic skills in literacy and numeracy is generally good, opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in a broad range of subjects is not fully in place.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is very calm, welcoming and harmonious. Pupils feel safe and looked after. Procedures to ensure health and safety are firmly in place. Support for vulnerable pupils and arrangements for child protection are clear and widely understood. The school is extremely successful in raising self-esteem and helping all pupils to develop their confidence as learners. Constant praise, reward and encouragement helps pupils quickly to make up for lost ground in their learning and improve their attendance and behaviour markedly. All pupils say that lessons are fun and that their teachers are very patient in explaining things. This helps them to achieve well. Links with external agencies such as therapists and the school nurse are exceptional. Many different agencies are working together very effectively with the school by developing ways of responding quickly to support pupils' welfare and personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders promote the personal development and well-being of all pupils very effectively. The school deserves much credit for the improvements it makes to the attendance, attitudes and behaviour of pupils. As such, equality of opportunity for pupils to achieve well, especially in their personal development, is outstanding. Inclusion lies at the heart of the school's work. The school works very effectively with mainstream schools regarding reintegration. Governors and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through effective self-evaluation. There are good arrangements in place to evaluate teaching and ensure that improvements are made where necessary. The school has recently established an imaginative curriculum which concentrates on developing key skills in all subjects. However, more time is needed before all the benefits are evident and the school is rightly developing ways to measure the impact that the curriculum is having on standards. Resources are well used to support learning. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis with administrative and site management staff making a good contribution.

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
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Inspection of Longford Park School, Stretford, M32 8PR

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome at your school and for all your help during the inspection. It was great to see your good work in lessons and we enjoyed talking with many of you.

Your school is good and it has some outstanding features. The school looks after you really well and adults help you in every way they can. Your attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. Well done. You love learning and this helps you to make good progress. You are taught well in lessons. Your curriculum is good because there are lots of chances for you to learn about many different things.

I really enjoyed talking with the school council. What great suggestions you have all made to improve things. The inspectors were so pleased to see the excellent contribution you all make to the community.

The school is in good hands. The staff and the governors are working very hard to make sure you carry on doing well.

There are two things that inspectors want to see improved. First, leaders and managers need to check that you are learning all the important things they want you to in the curriculum. Second, the school needs to create more chances for you to improve your writing. You can all help the school with these things by carrying on working hard and doing your best.

Once again, thank you for the welcome you gave us, it made our visit really enjoyable.

On behalf of the inspectors