

Newman School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106966
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	309276
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Emerson

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	67
6th form	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart Bowes
Headteacher	Mrs Suzette Garland-Grimes
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
School address	East Bawtry Road Whiston Rotherham South Yorkshire S60 3LX
Telephone number	01709 828262
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a special school for pupils with physical disabilities and medical conditions. A significant number of pupils have additional disabilities such as visual and hearing impairments or moderate learning difficulties. As a consequence of the pupils' significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities standards are low on entry to the school. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Three pupils are looked after by the local authority (LA). The majority of pupils are of White British origin with a significant minority from Asian or Asian British (Pakistani heritage) families. There are eight children on roll in the Foundation Stage and 19 students in the post-16 provision. The school holds a number of quality marks including the Primary and Secondary Basic Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Advanced award, Artsmark Silver award, Warwick Award for Enterprise, and Leading Aspect awards for Interactive Learning and for Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC). The school is subject to Local Authority reorganisation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils make excellent progress. Because of the learning difficulties and/or disabilities of the pupils their attainments are low in comparison to those found in mainstream schools. However, their achievement is exceptional. Although children enter the Foundation Stage with very limited communication and self-help skills they respond extremely well to the very skilled teaching and support which they are given. Consequently, they settle quickly into classroom routines and acquire the important skills of 'good sitting, looking and listening' so that they are ready to learn. Pupils from Year 1 to 11 make excellent progress and achieve very well in comparison to pupils with similar difficulties in other schools. This is reflected in the very good accredited results obtained by the pupils. Pupils in the post-16 provision continue this trend of excellent achievement. They leave school with a variety of academic and vocational qualifications and are very well prepared for adult life.

Teaching is outstanding. Pupils benefit from very stimulating lessons, work that is very well matched to their individual needs and excellent one to one support. This means that all pupils, irrespective of their disabilities, are fully included in lessons and learn very well. Pupils' work is marked with positive feedback to encourage them to try harder. However, some marking does not show the pupils clearly enough what they need to do to make their work even better. The curriculum is innovative and exciting while still maintaining a very strong focus on developing key skills such as literacy and numeracy.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Staff know the pupils very well and relationships are excellent. Consequently, pupils are extremely positive about all aspects of school life. They join in activities with enthusiasm and try very hard to produce good work. Their personal development is outstanding. Pupils make very good progress in learning how to make choices to keep themselves safe and healthy. This is recognised by the Healthy Schools Advanced award which the school holds. They are prepared extremely well to succeed in the community. For example, pupils who find speaking difficult make great strides in using specialist communication aids to communicate. There is a very active and effective school council and pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and to the wider community. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Relationships with parents, carers and outside agencies are extremely strong. Parents value the high quality individualised support which they report their children receive. For example, one parent, summing up the views of many, observed, 'My child is extremely happy. the school go well beyond their duty to make sure that she makes progress in her education as well as personal development.' All aspects of monitoring and evaluation are excellent. Pupils are assessed regularly and their progress is very carefully tracked. The school sets very challenging targets for individual pupils and for the school as a whole. The detailed and comprehensive analysis of results carried out by the school indicates that targets are met on time and often exceeded. The school has a very good awareness of how well it is doing even though it is too modest when evaluating its own performance.

The headteacher provides an extremely strong steer for the school and very skilled leadership. She is ably supported by the leadership team and by the subject leaders. Governors are expert and very proactive in moving the school forward. The school has made outstanding progress since the previous inspection and provides excellent value for money.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is very well led and managed. There is an extremely effective programme to promote independent living skills and all students achieve the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness or the Certificate of Life Skills. Students particularly value the independent travel training which they say enables them to use public transport successfully. The exemplary curriculum enables the pupils to study interesting courses at college, participate in enterprise schemes and work experience and gain a wide variety of academic and vocational qualifications. There are excellent opportunities for the students to take on responsibilities. For example, they run a breakfast bar serving a healthy menu which they have devised themselves. Consequently, the students make great strides in developing confidence and self-esteem. Their personal development is outstanding and they present as mature, sensible and caring young adults.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage offers children an outstanding start to their education. Excellent teamwork and sensitive support enables children to settle very well and make rapid progress. Parents are delighted at how well their children do. Parents comment that the rate of progress is 'astounding'. Children are very thoroughly assessed on entry to the school and the assessments are regularly updated. Very detailed individual records demonstrate the excellent progress children make, particularly in developing personal and social skills. Staff use signing very effectively to teach the pupils how to communicate. The school recognises that the use of visual symbols to promote communication is currently underdeveloped and plans to introduce more visual aids.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking shows pupils exactly what they have to do to make their work better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Standards are well below those found nationally because of the pupils learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the school's excellent tracking systems demonstrate very clearly that pupils in all age groups make excellent progress and achieve extremely well in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Consequently, a majority of pupils exceed the challenging targets which are set. They are achieving better than similar pupils across the country. The achievement of boys and girls and pupils of different ethnicity is equally good. Pupils who use communication devices make outstanding progress in communicating, with some pupils using the devices to build complex sentences. A wide range of accreditation enables Year 11 pupils to achieve highly. In 2007, all pupils who were well enough to attend school gained at least four entry level passes and three pupils gained a number of GCSEs. The pupils achieve particularly impressive results in English where pupils are often entered for GCSE before Year 11.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' attitudes in lessons and behaviour around the school are excellent. There were no exclusions last year. Pupils are delighted by their many achievements and have high aspirations for their future. They speak with pride about being invited to Cambridge University to meet Her Majesty the Queen and the Prime Minister to discuss the 'Personal Demons Project'. The school council is extremely effective and operates at a high level by, for example, successfully making bids for outside funding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Consequently, they develop into responsible, caring and thoughtful young people who make a real contribution to both the school and the wider community. Pupils have a very good understanding about how to stay healthy and safe. The excellent emphasis on developing independence skills, in conjunction with a very strong programme of work-related learning, places pupils in very good stead for succeeding in adult life. There are very good procedures to encourage good attendance. Attendance is good overall with a significant number of pupils having very good attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers and support staff have an expert understanding of the pupils' particular needs. Excellent teamwork and very well targeted one to one support ensures that all pupils are fully included in lessons and learn very well. Lessons are lively and fun and presented at just the right level for different groups. For example, the post-16 pupils learn very well because teachers relate to them as young adults. Work set is based on accurate assessment and very well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Teachers are skilled at reinforcing pupils' efforts both in lessons and when they mark work. However, some marking does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work even further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. There is a very good balance between teaching key skills such as literacy, training for independence, gaining accreditation and enrichment activities. The excellence of the curriculum is demonstrated by the awards, such as the Leading Aspect Awards which the school holds. A strength of the curriculum is the 'Personal Demons Project'. This is a unique multi-media educational experience with its own interactive website. Through the project, pupils have had excellent opportunities to develop skills in ICT, music and English through collaboration with Cambridge University, a children's novelist, a professional musician and film companies. The project has won many awards including a European e-learning award and enabled the pupils to work with other schools locally, nationally and internationally. A range of extremely high quality activities enrich the curriculum. For example, a group of pupils

engaged in an inspirational residential journalist project in Spain. The school organises a very good variety of clubs, which are hugely popular with the pupils and all of which are over subscribed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Care plans for individual pupils are of high quality and adhered to consistently by all staff. There are specialist plans in place, such as feeding plans and behavioural plans, for those pupils with additional difficulties. There are very good procedures to identify any pupils who are underachieving and these pupils are given very good support by the learning mentor. The school has introduced 'person centred planning' with the older pupils and students. This is a very effective way of involving pupils and parents in setting and reviewing personal targets. Plans are in place to gradually roll out the system with the younger pupils. Excellent links with outside agencies, including health personnel and therapists, and with parents, ensure that pupils' individual needs are very well met. All procedures for child protection, the safe recruitment of staff, health, safety and risk assessment are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, provides outstanding leadership for the school. The roles and responsibilities of the leadership team and the subject leaders are clear and there are very good lines of communication between all leaders and the governors. The performance of all aspects of provision are monitored very rigorously and the senior leadership team knows exactly how well the school is doing. The challenging targets which the school sets for itself are regularly reviewed and frequently exceeded. The school improvement plan is a very useful tool to move the school forward. Governors are expert and challenge the school and other partners very well. They are very closely involved in the life of the school by, for example, carrying out lesson observations and providing written feedback. Improvement since the previous inspection is excellent. The school provides excellent value for money. The uncertainties about the school's future role make forward planning difficult. Consequently, although the leadership team is extremely strong, the capacity for improvement is good rather than outstanding.

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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?	1	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

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	

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	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
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	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	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I really enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. It was very useful to know what you think about your school.

Your parents and carers think you go to an excellent school and I agree with them.

There are many things that are really outstanding in your school. These include:

- the excellent care and support which you are given so that you feel safe and can do very well
- the really exciting activities which you enjoy such as the 'Personal Demons Project'
- the excellent progress which you make in learning to communicate what you think using your communication devices
- the exceptionally good teaching, which enables you to learn masses in lessons.

All of this is possible because your headteacher and the staff do a fantastic job and try their very best to make the school as good as they can for you.

I have asked your teachers to improve one thing to make your school even better. This is:

- to make sure that when they mark your work they let you know exactly what you need to do next time to make it even better.

I hope you carry on enjoying what you are doing and continue to help your teachers all you can.