

Addington School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110187
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	310216
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	195
6th form	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Prior
Headteacher	Mrs E Meek
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Loddon Bridge Road Woodley Reading RG5 4BS
Telephone number	01189 540444
Fax number	01189 272480

Age group	3–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Addington School provides for pupils and students with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and those with profound and multiple disabilities (PMLD). Increasing numbers of pupils have complex medical issues in addition to their learning needs. Over one third of the school's population have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). One in five pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds and about one in ten pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The school has gained Specialist College status in music. Pupils and staff will relocate in 2009 to a newly built school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Addington is an outstanding school because pupils and students make exceptional progress both academically and in their personal development. These achievements are supported by excellent teaching and by a curriculum, which, because of the outstanding quality of assessment of pupils' progress, is very well tailored to the differing needs of all the learners. The pupils love coming to school and parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing that they enjoy their lessons and that the school has very high expectations of their progress. One parent's comment was typical: 'This school is 'fab' in every respect!'

The pupils feel safe and well supported in the friendly and supportive ethos of the school. They learn to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave well. They value the school and this is evident through the very good relationships they have with staff, their good attendance and the obvious pride they have in the school and their own achievements. They told inspectors that they liked their lessons and 'liked working hard'.

All the pupils do well in their studies and many make outstanding progress. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make an excellent start to their education. Students in post 16 provision achieve highly in applying their knowledge and skills to practical situations. The high quality of teaching means that pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. Learning activities are characterised by the high quality of support given to pupils by well-trained learning assistants and specialist teachers and by the very high expectations, which all adults have for the pupils' success. The school's procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' overall achievement are exceptional and this enables teachers to keep a close eye on pupils to make sure they achieve as highly as they can. However there are sometimes inconsistencies in the way teachers record the pupils' small steps in learning. Pupils with autism and those with profound and multiple learning needs are included in classes where learning activities challenge them to perform to the best of their abilities.

Specialist provision for music is outstanding. For instance, every pupil has the opportunity to join musical celebrations and some pupils perform in concerts alongside mainstream peers. Many pupils are encouraged to learn an orchestral instrument. These opportunities add to the pupils' enjoyment of school and have a significant impact on their self-confidence and social development. Pupils with complex communication disorders are supported through music therapy, which adds to their awareness of and confidence in interacting with others.

The headteacher's experience, her clear vision and her commitment to the students and staff have enabled her to give outstanding leadership to the school. She receives excellent support from competent senior managers and a committed staff team. The governing body monitors the school's work very effectively and challenges leaders continually to improve provision for the learners. Addington School is very highly regarded locally because of valuable work in supporting mainstream staff and pupils. The school evaluates its own work to an exceptional degree. It has consistently improved provision since the previous inspection, when it was judged a very good school. There is an outstanding capacity to continue this improvement as the school moves into a new phase in its development.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Many pupils make outstanding progress, especially in their basic literacy and numeracy, their life skills training, and in their work related learning. They make excellent progress also in their personal development because of outstanding procedures to help them gain experiences of adult life. For instance, all the students, including those with PMLD, take part in work experience, which is carefully adapted to their abilities. The staff effectively promote an adult ethos and mature behaviour. Excellent teaching results in all the students achieving their potential through a range of accredited qualifications. The school has developed good links with local colleges and almost all pupils leave for further education courses. The leadership and management of the provision are of a very high quality.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make exceptional progress in their communication, in their physical development and in their personal skills and behaviour. This provides a very good basis for their learning as they move up the school. There are rigorous procedures to monitor the children's work and their activities are very well matched to appropriate small steps in learning. The staff know their children very well and demonstrate this by the excellent standards of planning and teaching, tailored to the needs of each individual. Children receive a high level of individual attention and relationships are excellent. There are very effective partnerships with parents. The children are very well cared for and consistently encouraged to understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy. They respond by behaving very well. The department is very well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers follow consistent procedures when they record the small steps in progress, which the pupils make.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

All the pupils achieve well and many make outstanding progress. Pupils in the Foundation Stage, many of whom enter the school with low levels of attainment, get off to a flying start and this prepares them very well for the next steps in their education. Although the pupils' attainment remains well below national expectations, they continue to progress as fast and as far as they can and so realise their potential. For instance, the pupils with PMLD and those with autistic conditions, although achieving success by tiny steps, make progress at a rate, which is often higher than that found amongst pupils with the same disabilities in similar schools. Students in post 16 provision continue to make excellent progress and this enables them to gain a range of appropriate qualifications. Pupils at early stages of learning English make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills. The school's highly effective tracking and analysis of each pupil's progress helps ensure that there is no underachievement by any individual or group. Many pupils make excellent progress in meeting challenging targets in their individual education plans (IEP).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The pupils' excellent progress in personal development reflects the school's emphasis on moral and social values and teachers' skilful management of pupils' behaviour. The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils make excellent gains in social skills through a wide range of communal activities. Similarly, the older students in post 16 provision increase their economic awareness through their very good progress in work related learning.

The pupils are calm and very well behaved because they feel safe and confident and know what is expected from them. The pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and those pupils spoken to reported no bullying or intimidation. They told inspectors that, 'Everyone is friendly here'. The pupils have an excellent understanding of the value of exercise and healthy eating because of the extensive personal, health and social education (PHSE) programmes and exceptional opportunities to take part in physical exercise. Above all, the pupils report that their learning is fun. This results in their excellent behaviour and good attendance despite the continual illnesses and debilitating conditions from which some suffer. The many parents who returned questionnaires, with a very few exceptions, expressed their gratitude for the high standards of care and teaching which their children experience.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The excellent and consistent quality of teaching has been maintained through rigorous and effective monitoring by subject leaders and senior staff. Teachers know their pupils very well and this enables them to plan challenging, well-paced and interesting activities for each pupil, so ensuring many of them make outstanding progress. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' achievements. They scrupulously assess and record each small step in pupils' progress and this has a very positive impact on their achievement. However, teachers do not always follow agreed recording procedures consistently. There are very good relationships in all classrooms between staff and pupils. Pupils receive high levels of individual tuition and this gives them the confidence to try new things. The pupils therefore enjoy their lessons and try their best. Teachers manage the pupils' behaviour extremely well and staff deal with challenging behaviour calmly and with understanding and support for the pupil involved. Pupils understand and respond well to clear routines. This assists teachers to maintain a clear focus on learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it is so precisely adapted to the differing learning needs of the pupils. Specialist teachers and support staff provide a high standard of additional support, where appropriate, to ensure that all pupils can take advantage of the full range of activities. The effective monitoring by subject leaders ensures that the curriculum is continually developing as learners' needs change. The Foundation Stage curriculum is soundly based on early learning

strategies and very well adapted to each child's learning needs. There is excellent provision throughout the school to develop the pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy and this increases their access to learning opportunities in other subjects. There are very good programmes to help pupils understand how to keep safe and healthy and to prepare them for the next stage in their lives. This is illustrated effectively in the outstanding curriculum for work related learning in post 16 provision. Pupils of all abilities make exceptional progress through the outstanding provision for music and this has a positive impact on their confidence and self esteem. Pupils have a very good choice of activities outside lessons including lunchtime and after school clubs. Many pupils enjoy and actively participate in these activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' care, welfare and support are at the forefront of everything that the school does. Staff make every effort to ensure that pupils' medical, personal, therapeutic and learning needs are met. This ensures that pupils are in the best possible position to learn. The school monitors attendance very effectively and the pupils benefit greatly from the exemplary support given to parents when the children are ill or where there are family difficulties. The outstanding level of assessment and recording of the pupils' achievement means that parents receive a high standard of information at Annual Review meetings. Teachers use effective constructive marking to help pupils know how to improve their work. Pupils thus have a clear understanding of their learning targets. Older students receive very good support as they are about to take the next steps in their life. The well established links with local colleges results in almost all students going on to further education courses when they leave school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The management team retain a very good overview of pupils' achievements through the excellent procedures for assessment and tracking, and use this to ensure that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities and that their targets are both relevant and challenging. The headteacher, who shows outstanding leadership in her determination continually to improve standards of provision, has driven this clear focus. A strong senior team has supported her. A major reason for the school's success lies in the rigorous and effective way managers evaluate and improve on every aspect of the school's performance. For instance, subject leaders effectively monitor each aspect of the curriculum and play a significant role in maintaining standards of teaching and learning.

Communication within the school is excellent. Staff feel fully consulted, involved and valued. There are excellent procedures to support new staff. Governors provide outstanding support to the school, they work closely with senior staff and they rigorously monitor the school's strengths and areas for development.

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?	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	1	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	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	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

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Addington School, Reading, RG5 4BS

Not long ago my colleague and I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make the school better. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom, at school council and at lunchtimes. Thank you and well done.

We were with you for two days. That was long enough for us to see that you go to an outstanding school. We could see that you all enjoy school very much. We liked many things. Here are a few.

- You work hard and make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development.
- The many different people at the school look after you very well.
- There is an excellent range of activities including those that help you become independent, make choices and learn how to behave well.
- You receive excellent teaching and your teachers and other staff are very good at recording all the progress you make. This helps them to prepare interesting work for each of you. Sometimes the way they write things about you, however, varies from teacher to teacher.
- Your headteacher runs the school extremely well and everyone else including your parents gives her good support.

We would like the teachers to make sure that they all write down important things, about how you are getting on in your work, in the same way. You can help too, just by working as hard as you have been doing!

Please thank your parents for all the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mel Blackband

Lead Inspector