

Paternoster School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115824
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312069
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Elizabeth Bull

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	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Arnold
Headteacher	Julie Mantell
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
School address	Watermoor Road Cirencester GL7 1JS
Telephone number	01285 652480
Fax number	01285 642490

Age group	2-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Paternoster School is a special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). There is currently no sixth form. The number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and challenging behaviours is increasing. Since 2006, there has been an increase in the number of pupils with PMLD joining the school into the Foundation Stage. Numbers have risen over the last three years and the school is nearly full. There are more boys than girls in the school. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. Pupils come to the school from a wide area and varied backgrounds. About one fifth of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Paternoster is a good school with a number of outstanding features. It successfully combines nurturing and cherishing its pupils with academic challenge. As a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding and their achievement is good. Provision in the Foundation Stage is also good. The school has been very successful in developing close links with a range of partners so that the care, guidance and support the pupils receive are excellent. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons is very evident in their excellent behaviour, very good attendance and in the enthusiasm they have for their work. The curriculum is good, and much thought has been given to establishing a thematic curriculum. This has resulted in a vibrant and stimulating learning environment, where the quality of teaching is good and the pupils are well supported by competent teaching assistants. Work experience and community use are very effective in preparing pupils for their future pathways on leaving school. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, make healthy choices and become responsible young citizens. Most achieve these skills extremely well.

The overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the school, acknowledging that it is led and managed well and that staff help their children make good progress. Their comments can be summarised by one parent who said, 'Our son has progressed better than we ever thought he would, he is so happy and keen to come to school, has benefited so much from the large variety of outside visits and has changed beyond belief. School has been so supportive'.

Leadership and management are good. Strategic planning is effective in securing improvement. Target setting and individual education plans are relevant and meaningful and support pupils' progress well. However, although monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress are in place for some subjects, the school's systems do not provide a clear enough picture of the rates of progress pupils make in all subjects and over time. Assessment systems are developing well in the core subjects and further development work is planned so that subject coordinators take a more active role in monitoring the effectiveness of their subject.

The school is diligent in keeping people safe, both within school and when out in the community. Safeguarding procedures meet the regulations and current practice is good. The rigour of risk assessments ensures swift action if any potential risks are identified. Governors are professional and effective in the way they support and challenge the school. There has been continued improvement since the last inspection and the school gives good value for money. It has a track record of sustained improvement and has good capacity to continue.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, particularly in their personal and social development because it is well led and managed. They benefit from a curriculum and teaching that is suitably matched to their wide range of needs and are happy and thrive under the care and support provided by staff. Children's needs are well met and consequently they make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- develop the monitoring role of subject coordinators so they are better able to identify areas for development, ensure consistency in practice and maximise achievement

- refine the systems for analysing and tracking pupils' progress to provide a clearer picture of pupils' achievements across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are significantly below average but pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, make good progress in their learning overall and achieve well. Senior staff monitor the pupils' individual targets regularly. Most pupils make good progress against the targets set in their individual plans. Recent work has ensured that targets are more challenging and relevant, and this is already showing signs of improving the progress made by pupils. Lesson planning takes account of pupils' targets and, where appropriate, pupils are involved in reviewing their progress towards their targets.

The introduction of a commercial scheme to help identify small steps of achievement is supporting assessment satisfactorily, although it is not yet being used in all subjects. It does not yet provide a clear enough picture of how much progress pupils are making in all subjects across the school or demonstrate the impact of any actions that subject coordinators have taken to raise standards. A number of pupils obtain externally accredited qualifications in the core subjects as well as life and living skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because of the good teaching, the curriculum and the excellent care the school provides. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well supported by their personal, social, health and citizenship education, religious education lessons, visits and visitors, assemblies and special events such as the music and dance festivals. One example out of many is 'International Week' where each class becomes a country and invites other classes to visit and find out about their country. This greatly supports pupils' cultural and social development, and helps pupils to learn to appreciate each other's differences.

Pupils really enjoy school and this is reflected in excellent attendance and behaviour. They have a good sense of living in a community and appreciate the care and support provided for them. Healthy lifestyles are promoted very well and pupils are encouraged to keep fit through the many sporting activities on offer. Pupils take on responsibility by 'having a job', such as delivering snacks or putting equipment away. Pupils are regularly involved in fundraising and older pupils are involved in Enterprise projects. Through activities such as these, pupils gain in self-esteem and learn skills that help to prepare them well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, including in the Foundation Stage. Teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and is good overall. Most teachers plan carefully, taking into account the needs of each pupil. They use a good range of strategies that make learning interesting and keep pupils focused. The most effective lessons are planned well, meet the needs of all pupils, proceed at a brisk pace and include the use of a range of

stimulating activities and resources. Pupils enjoy these lessons as they are motivated to learn and are suitably challenged. These good features are not yet consistent in all lessons. Some good use of questioning engages pupils and extends their learning. Teachers know their pupils very well and this helps them plan work for individual pupils. The knowledgeable teaching assistants support teachers and pupils effectively. Teachers manage behaviour very well and successfully maintain a calm and stress-free classroom atmosphere through their expertise in creating clearly structured learning activities. These factors enable pupils to work with increased levels of concentration and help them to enjoy their lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is enriched by a wide range of activities, visits and lunchtime clubs which support pupils' personal and social development well. The thematic curriculum, although in its early stages, is beginning to have a positive impact as shown by pupils' enjoyment and engagement in activities and good rates of progress. Facilities such as a hydrotherapy pool and sports hall, as well as increased information and communication technology (ICT) resources greatly enhance provision. The curriculum sets out to enable all pupils to develop confidence and responsibility, and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. The school does this successfully. The school works closely with other schools, colleges, employers and the Connexions service and prepares pupils well for when they leave school. Courses at Key Stage 4 have been extended and are benefiting pupils as their needs, abilities and interests are met more effectively, and pupils gain appropriate accreditation for their work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Considerable attention is given to each individual pupil's needs and the school has a strong commitment to knowing and supporting all the pupils. The very positive relationships throughout the school, with home and with other support agencies, add greatly to this. Parents fully appreciate the high quality of care and support; they feel pupils are safe and well looked after. One parent stated, 'Paternoster is a wonderful school and provides a safe and complete learning environment'. Very good academic guidance enables all pupils to achieve well. Individual education plans are used well to personalise the curriculum for each student and these make a significant contribution to their good progress in developing their personal, social and independence skills. Progress is regularly assessed and monitored throughout the year. Where possible, pupils are involved in the target-setting process and pupils know how well they are doing because they receive clear, constructive feedback. Child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective and reviewed regularly. Health and safety procedures and risk assessments for visits and trips are thorough. Extensive liaison with other agencies, professionals and local schools successfully ensures pupils' needs are met effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has effected considerable improvement since the last inspection through her purposeful leadership and nurturing of a shared partnership with everyone in the school. This has ensured that every member of staff feels valued as part of a successful team. Subject coordinators are having an increasing impact on the development of the curriculum and teaching

and learning, such as in the much more effective provision for writing and ICT. Strategic planning is effective and the leadership team has correctly identified the areas for development. The school makes best use of some limitations in the accommodation. The leadership team monitors the school's work effectively and there is clarity of understanding as to how it can improve. The tracking and analysis of pupils' achievement is developing well and has the potential to have an even greater impact on the pupils' good progress. Governors are actively and productively involved in the life of the school. They ensure that statutory requirements are met. The excellent supportive climate promoted in the school has made pupils feel very secure and underpins their good progress. This good school is within reach of being an outstanding one.

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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
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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
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	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
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

As you know, we recently visited your school to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for looking after us and making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed our visit and learned a lot about your school. Thank you for telling us about the things you do and how you think your teachers and other staff are helping you to learn.

Your school is a good school with some excellent features. These are its strengths:

- the school is a happy place to be and you really enjoy being there
- the school tries hard to help you live a healthy lifestyle
- you are well looked after and staff do their best to make sure your lessons are interesting
- you work hard and make good progress in your work and excellent progress in your personal development
- your school is well run.

We have asked staff to do two things to make your school even better:

- make sure subject coordinators check that their subject is well planned and equally well taught so that they can help you to learn even more
- use information about how well you do to make sure that everyone can see the progress you make in all the different activities and subjects.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. We wish you every success in the future.



22 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Paternoster School, Cirencester GL7 1JS

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Liz Bull
Lead Inspector