

St Luke's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118147
Local Authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	312822
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs B Abbey
Headteacher	Dr R Ashdown
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
School address	Grange Lane North Scunthorpe DN16 1BN
Telephone number	01724 844560
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a school for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. Occasionally, pupils with more moderate learning difficulties are admitted, usually towards the end of Key Stage 2. About a quarter of the pupils exhibit autistic spectrum disorders, many with associated behavioural difficulties. Boys outnumber girls by about two to one. About one tenth of pupils come from homes where English is not the main language spoken. A quarter of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils join the school at the very earliest stage of learning and personal development. A few are relatively higher attaining and are expected to transfer to other schools at the start of Key Stage 1. A small minority of pupils are looked after by the local authority. All pupils have a statement of special educational need or are being assessed for one.

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. Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending and their parents are almost unanimous in saying that this is a good school and the right one for their children. Parents appreciate the caring and safe environment the school provides and the good progress they see being made by their children.

The overall quality of teaching is good, and this enables pupils to make rapid progress throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Most continue to make good progress through Key Stage 2, but over the past year progress in Year 6 has been tailing off. This has been particularly so in English. Teachers are knowledgeable about the difficulties pupils face and are good at varying tasks to suit the ability of individuals, but a few teachers do not manage isolated incidents of misbehaviour with enough confidence to prevent them from interfering with learning.

Most pupils behave well most of the time. Nearly all recorded bad behaviour is closely linked to recognised and assessed personal difficulties. Nevertheless, the unpredictable impulsive behaviour of those few pupils does occasionally unsettle others and make them feel less safe. Attendance is satisfactory. A few pupils had more absence than expected last year and this resulted in the school not meeting its target for attendance. Independence in learning and mobility is strongly promoted, with good results. Staff are good at helping pupils to communicate by whatever means they can. The school council has been involved in decisions to develop a fitness trail and cycle route in the grounds, demonstrating pupils' awareness of the need to keep healthy and also the commitment of pupils to improving the community of the school. These factors contribute well to pupils' future prospects.

The good curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects and experiences. Frequent trips take learning out of the classroom and make it fun, interesting and relevant. The physical and emotional care of pupils is outstanding; although limitations in the assessment of their academic progress restrict the effectiveness of educational support and guidance that can be given to them.

The school is well led and managed, and gives good value for money. Managers are well aware of the school's strengths and where it could be better. Improvements have been made since the last inspection and there are clear, shared plans for the future. However, the plans have been hampered by some staff absences and the underdeveloped nature of whole-school target-setting and self-evaluation. Therefore, the school currently has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is good. Children often enter it with very few learning or personal skills. Good teaching results in nearly all children making rapid progress. This is most noticeable amongst the more able children, about one in five, whose progress suggests they could thrive in mainstream schools. Those children with the greatest degree of difficulty or disability clearly enjoy school and make good progress because their teachers are sensitive to their needs and fully include them in all activities. Teachers show a good understanding of how very young children learn through investigation and discovery. More opportunities to help children to learn

through play have recently been incorporated into the timetable. Curriculum development has been interrupted by long-term staff absence, but is now back on track.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable all staff to manage the behaviour of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders more consistently and effectively.
- Develop more rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress.
- Use the results of these systems to help with whole-school target-setting and self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils cannot attain standards in line with national expectations because of the nature and severity of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Instead, progress is measured against individual targets. Most of these are well met, demonstrating good progress.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with very little previous learning. By the end of the stage, about a fifth are performing on a par with lower attaining children in primary schools. Most of these children then transfer into mainstream schooling. For others good progress continues through Key Stage 1. No pupils reach Level 1 of the National Curriculum by the end of Year 2 but a few get close to it. Most get about halfway there. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, almost a third of them have reached the standard expected of pupils four years younger in mainstream schools. This represents good progress.

There are a few pupils who, because of the severity of their learning difficulty and/or disability, remain at the very earliest stages of learning and development. Teachers and parents can see the good progress they are making, but systems for recognising and recording the tiny improvements made are not sufficiently informative. There is little evidence to suggest that any group of pupils performs differently from any other or that progress varies between subjects. Looked-after children and those from minority ethnic families are well supported to help them to achieve on a par with all other pupils. There is evidence though, that misbehaviour prevents some pupils from making enough progress in Year 6, especially in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is the promotion of their well-being. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most attend whenever they can. The consideration most pupils show for one another and their willingness to help younger or less able members of the school community demonstrate a good level of social awareness. Pupils' concern over misbehaviour shows an understanding of what is right or wrong. Coupled with the fact that many pupils try to help others through difficult moments, this indicates the establishment of good moral values. Nearly all misbehaviour is closely associated to specific difficulties such as autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The frequency of serious incidents has been rapidly falling over the past two terms. Racism and bullying are practically unheard of. Success is roundly celebrated. This generates a 'feel-good' atmosphere and contributes enormously to individuals' feelings of self-worth. Alongside the moments of contemplation, which are timetabled into each day's activities, this generates a good sense of spiritual development. Pupils learn a lot about local culture, often through visits to places of interest, but not enough is done to share the views and experiences of minority ethnic parents to broaden pupils'

understanding of cultures other than their own. Pupils eat healthily and exercise with enthusiasm. For many, walking is hard work but they persevere. The excellent physical care of pupils contributes enormously to helping them to stay safe. Pupils value having a voice through the school council, which comes up with good ideas for improving the school. The good progress pupils make in improving their communication skills, and the way in which they grow in independence, contributes well to each pupil improving their future prospects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. As a result, pupils learn well. Teachers are particularly good at balancing the physical and emotional care of pupils alongside promoting learning. Classrooms are well organised and large staff teams efficiently managed. Teachers vary work carefully, enabling more able pupils to work with a good degree of independence and for less able ones to receive more help. Many staff show good skills in helping pupils with specific disabilities, for instance those with autism and those with the most profound and complex difficulties. These skills are most evident in the special classes for these pupils. Across the school, staff are very perceptive in helping pupils to communicate through the use of a wide range of methods, including the use of signs, symbols and technological aids. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards and plasma screens to enliven lessons and keep the attention of pupils. Behaviour is usually well managed, but a few teachers outside the special classes experience difficulty in managing the most extreme misbehaviour of a few pupils. This sometimes interrupts the learning of whole groups. There is inconsistency in the quality of marking pupils' work. Too often, marking does not make it clear what a pupil has achieved or how the work could be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets requirements and is well enriched by frequent trips and school events, including a good range of visitors. This adds considerably to pupils' enjoyment of school. When pupils are withdrawn from classrooms to receive special help, for instance from therapists, this is carefully planned to ensure that they do not miss out on important learning activities. A growing number of pupils visit mainstream schools for part of each week, preparing them well for possible transfer to those schools in the future. Personal, social and health education is good and contributes well to pupils' development. Simple events, such as trips to shops, serve as good learning and social opportunities. The parents of some pupils with autism have expressed considerable gratitude for the school demonstrating that their children can go shopping without attracting the wrong sort of attention. The timetable includes many good opportunities for pupils to socialise, and eat healthy snacks. It was good to see pupils helping to clear away and washing up after one of these interludes, thus contributing to the community of the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The physical and emotional care of pupils is outstanding. This is underpinned by rigorous safeguarding systems, which help to ensure that the school is a safe and happy place. Parents find this very reassuring and pupils greatly

appreciate it. The school works exceptionally closely and effectively with a wide range of specialists, including therapists and health workers. Guidance and support for learning are satisfactory. Large staff teams ensure that pupils receive a lot of individual support and through this are helped to do their best. What is less well developed is the consistency and perceptiveness with which staff assess and report the very small steps through which pupils make progress. The school is currently exploring systems to help staff do this more effectively. Staff work very closely with parents to help get the best outcomes for pupils. Parents particularly appreciate the openness and ease of access to their children's teachers, and school leaders and managers. Many also appreciate the reassuring care, guidance and support that the school extends to them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Care is taken to help all pupils to thrive equally, helped by a good, happy staff team, which is committed to seeking improvement. Managers share a perception of the school's strengths and where improvements need to be made. However, the underdeveloped assessment systems mean that information about pupils' progress is too variable in quality for setting the right kind of targets to raise standards.

Parents and pupils are frequently consulted about possible changes and good notice is taken of the views of the local authority and school improvement partner. Managers are currently exploring ways of further involving parents in their children's education, for instance by looking at the possibility of providing those who live furthest away with transport to help them get into school for meetings and activities.

Resources, including staff, are efficiently used and spending is carefully monitored to ensure that the school gives good value for money. Governance is good. Individual governors gain a good understanding of how well the school works by visiting the school regularly and reporting back to the whole governing body. The unavoidable long-term absence of some senior staff over the past year has compromised the school's capacity to improve by delaying planned improvements to the school's self-evaluation and assessment procedures.

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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	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

16 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Luke's Primary School, North Lincolnshire, DN16 1BN

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I spent a very pleasant couple of days with you and enjoyed visiting your classrooms and watching you play. I liked what I saw and think that you are lucky to attend such a good, well managed school.

I visit schools like yours to see how you are getting on. You are doing well and it was very clear that you are happy and safe in school. You work hard and try hard to be nice to each other and to your teachers. Sometimes a few of you find it hard to do as you are told, but I'm sure you try as hard as you can. Your teachers are going to look at ways to help you behave even better.

Your teachers work hard to help you to learn. They make lessons enjoyable and make sure that you are well looked after. You clearly enjoy going on trips to places you have been learning about, and I'm sure that many of you will remember the steel band that visited a while ago. The photographs were good and I could see you enjoyed joining in.

I have asked your teachers to start looking more closely at how they check up on how well you are learning, so that they can be sure you are doing as well as you can. If they do this it should help the people who run the school to make little adjustments to make it even better.

Thanks again!

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector