

# Southall School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123631
<b>Local Authority</b>	Telford and Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	314651
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Julia Coop

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	147
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alistair Bates
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2005
<b>School address</b>	off Rowan Avenue Dawley Telford TF4 3PX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01952 387600
<b>Fax number</b>	01952 591207

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

### Description of the school

Southall provides for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils entering school with autistic spectrum disorders and severe learning difficulties has increased. In addition, a small but significant number of pupils with emotional, social and behaviour difficulties have recently joined the school, including a small proportion of pupils who have additional, and often severe, emotional difficulties. The nature of the pupils' learning difficulties means that they are working well below national expectations. The school serves a wide socially-mixed area and most pupils travel long distances to attend the school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.

The school changed from an all age special school to a secondary school in September 2006. Since then, there have been significant changes. Almost half of the pupils are new to the school. Additionally, there has been a high proportion of staff changes with most subject leaders and senior managers new to their role.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005,, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Southall is an ineffective school. The school has been through a period of considerable change. Leaders, managers and staff have found the transition from a school that followed a primary school approach to one that operates a secondary model difficult. This has been made more challenging because funding issues have meant that since September 2007 there has been a reduction in staffing. This has coincided with the arrival of a small but increasing number of pupils who have emotional, social and behaviour difficulties and complex emotional issues. Staff have struggled to continue to meet the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders who are taught alongside emotionally troubled pupils. As a result, the curriculum has not been adapted well enough to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders who require a more specialised and structured approach.

A third of all parents completed the inspection questionnaire or contacted the inspection team. Nearly half of these responses reported concerns about the curriculum for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders the poor behaviour of pupils with emotional, social and behaviour difficulties and the effect that these are having on their children's education. Although most pupils know how to ask for help, many pupils spoke of 'being bullied' and the impact that 'bad behaviour in lessons' has on their learning. As a result, the pupils' personal as well as their academic progress is hindered.

Too many pupils are asked to leave lessons throughout the day to be supported by senior managers or the student support officer because not all staff use the school's behaviour management strategies successfully. Pupils do not have a clear code of conduct to follow and are not clear about the school rules. This has resulted in senior leaders spending too much time dealing with behaviour matters at the expense of other aspects of their role. Consequently, basic management systems, such as formal procedures to manage staff performance, are not fully established and weaknesses in teaching have not been addressed.

Despite having a good vision for the school, the headteacher, in an effort to support his senior staff, has taken the day-to-day and long-term strategic management of the school onto his own shoulders. This has proved too much because he has also had to intervene as the pupils' behaviour has deteriorated in the past few months. Very little monitoring of teaching and learning has been undertaken. Pupils' academic performance data have not been analysed recently or regularly enough so there is not enough information available about pupils' progress. The school does not have the systems in place to accurately evaluate its performance or to be able to set challenging targets for improvement. Although the headteacher and governors recognise the school is at a crisis point and have recently requested additional support from the local authority, many staff do not have a clear enough understanding of the school's or pupils' performance and believe it is more successful than it really is.

Inspection evidence shows that the current rate of pupil progress is inadequate overall. This is due mainly to unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons. The lack of relevant and recent assessment

information means that teachers do not have sufficient information about pupils' learning on which to plan a more relevant range of activities to meet the widely different needs and abilities in their class, particularly the more able pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Consequently, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.

Although pupils receive lots of pastoral care, good careers guidance and individual pupils get the right sort of help when they are worried, pupils do not receive clear guidance about their own learning. This means pupils do not know what they need to do to improve. There is some good teaching and learning in the school, particularly in some vocational subjects and where teachers' plan carefully and are able to motivate all pupils; this is most successful in English. The assessment and target-setting systems established recently are a model of good practice that is contributing to improving achievement in reading and writing.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

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- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels, ensuring that senior leaders have sufficient time to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning and to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Ensure performance data are analysed regularly so that they can be used to inform self-evaluation, set challenging targets and improve teachers' planning.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by insisting that all staff use effective behaviour management strategies consistently and provide pupils with a clear code of conduct for them to uphold.
- Improve the curriculum provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders so that they can all achieve to the best of their ability, particularly the more able.
- Improve pupils' knowledge of their own learning so they are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and are helped to make better progress.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 4**

In 2007, all pupils leaving the school achieved success in a range of academic and vocational subjects and went on to start a college course. This represented satisfactory achievement. Inspection evidence shows that current pupils are not making as much progress and that their achievement is inadequate. This is partly because the increasing number of disruptive pupils adversely affects other pupils' ability to concentrate. A more able pupil with autistic spectrum disorders commented that 'When pupils get angry, they get sent out. It is annoying and stops us learning, but when they come back to class, the teacher still shouts at them.'

In English, most pupils are doing better than in other subjects because a new approach to assessment and planning is making a positive difference to the tasks set for different pupils. Pupils are set challenging targets and are being helped to reach them. Similar developments are beginning to happen in science. In other subjects, pupils are not reaching their potential because work is not matched carefully enough to their learning needs or ability. In mathematics, for example, opportunity to gain the higher GCSE qualification is not currently available and the more able pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are not sufficiently challenged. Whilst many parents are happy with the school and consider that their children are making good progress, inspectors found that, even when considering their additional learning needs, some pupils spend too much time working through repetitive worksheets that do not develop some of their basic skills well enough.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 4

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Even though many pupils complain that they are bullied, and feel uncomfortable when they hear other pupils swearing, they are not afraid to ask for help and know who to go to if they are unhappy. A good personal development and food studies programme is helping pupils to understand about the need to choose healthy options, although despite this positive encouragement some pupils with autistic spectrum disorders have a restricted diet. Pupils also have a secure awareness of the dangers of drug taking. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders generally behave well and, despite instances of bad behaviour, say they still enjoy coming to school, as shown by their satisfactory attendance. However, their enjoyment is spoiled because a small but significant minority of pupils with emotional, social and behaviour difficulties do not behave well enough in lessons. They find it difficult to control their behaviour and the increasing rate of short term exclusions and records of racist 'name calling' shows that they have inadequate social, moral and cultural development. As a result, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders say that they 'feel stressed'. Pupils undertake some general tasks around the school, can express their views through tutor groups and have worked on projects such as improving the environment. However, there is no elected, formal school council, for example, where pupils can learn about making democratic decisions through being advocates for their peers. Pupils have opportunities to work within the local community although opportunities are restricted through the need for transport.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

There are pockets of good teaching in the school but the overall impact of teaching on pupils' learning is inadequate. Many teachers do not cope successfully with challenging behaviour. With the exception of the English teachers and senior staff, most other teachers do not accurately assess pupils' learning. This, coupled with the lack of a regular analysis of performance data, means that activities are not matched carefully enough to pupils' individual needs. Pupils enjoy the practical activities but in many lessons all pupils are expected to complete the same work regardless of their ability or learning needs. Pupils who find it difficult to record their ideas often spend time colouring in. Teachers, the majority of whom have been used to a primary teaching model, do not use a wide enough variety of teaching approaches to make learning more relevant for secondary-aged pupils with severe learning difficulties or less able pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. However, teaching assistants are very supportive. They take time to work with troubled pupils and help pupils when activities are too difficult. More able pupils are often not challenged sufficiently by the work. The autistic spectrum disorders specialist teaching assistant is also effective but she is unable to work with all pupils with autistic spectrum disorders because of too many demands on her time.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 4

There are some good features in the curriculum. The English, personal, social and work related aspects of the curriculum for example are well structured and suitably adapted to meet pupils' interests and needs. This helps older pupils to successfully move on to college or assisted work

placements and ensures pupils have the necessary skills to keep themselves safe. However, the school has struggled to adapt to a secondary approach to curriculum planning, which has to cater for pupils with a diverse range of learning and behavioural difficulties. Funding pressure has limited the recruitment of specialist staff and has prevented this provision being extended as planned. This has had an adverse impact on achievement. Many pupils with autistic spectrum disorders find it difficult to cope with a curriculum that requires a change of room and teacher. Parents are rightly concerned that this is unsettling their children. The current curriculum does not fully meet the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders. However, the school has established a successful tutorial group for older pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and provides a Southall Team Around the Child for some pupils with additional educational needs

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 4**

Particularly vulnerable pupils receive the right sort of counselling to help them overcome their personal difficulties. Pupils with more complex issues receive appropriate specialist support from outside agencies, as required. Safeguarding and recruitment procedures meet requirements. Although a few parents expressed concern that pupils are often unsupervised at home time, there was no evidence during the inspection that this was the case. Pupils say that 'staff look after them'. A lot of thought has gone into the personal development programme, which is helping pupils to build their social skills. As a result, they know what their personal targets are, such as 'not to talk too loudly' or 'put my hand up if I need help'. However, behaviour management systems are not working; pupils with emotional, social and behaviour difficulties do not experience a consistent approach to help modify their behaviour. As a result, they learn to 'play the system' and it is too easy for them to have themselves withdrawn from lessons they do not want to be in. The school has correctly recognised the need to provide mentoring and support for the pupils with emotional, social and behaviour difficulties, but the student support officer is unable to fulfil this role fully because his time is taken up dealing with the pupils leaving lessons.

Academic guidance is inadequate. Marking does not guide learning well and the endings to lessons are not used to help pupils assess their own learning. Except in English, pupils do not have individual subject learning targets so they do not recognise their next learning steps to help support better progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

The headteacher is ambitious for the school and, in his desire to make changes, he has spent time preparing a bid for specialist status, in addition to taking responsibility for day-to-day management. This has added to his workload and created additional pressure. He has the support of his senior staff and governors, who have worked hard to get to grips with their responsibilities and to ensure teachers fulfil their new roles. They have met resistance from a few staff who have found it difficult to cope with the primary to secondary re-designation. Senior managers have consequently been preoccupied with behavioural issues because a few staff have required greater support with pupil discipline issues. However, because performance management systems have not been fully established and little formal monitoring of lessons

has been undertaken, weaknesses in teaching and behaviour management have not been addressed.

The school improvement plan is still in draft form so it is not in a position to forward the changes required quickly enough. In addition, although the school has a wealth of data, this has not been analysed this academic year in order to set challenging targets for improvement. The governing body is supportive but recognises it has to be more involved in monitoring the school if it is to ensure that the school's vision of being a successful secondary special school is to be realised. Given the inadequate leadership and management, including inadequate monitoring, together with the school's own request for substantial support from the local authority, the school's current capacity to improve is inadequate.



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## 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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	4
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	4
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	4
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	4
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out about your school. The most important thing to say is that we have decided that your school needs extra help, known as 'special measures'. This is because many of the teachers are not coping with the poor behaviour that disrupts some of you in making better progress in your lessons. The work that you are being given, the help that you receive and the way that the lessons are organised are also not helping all of you to learn successfully. The school leaders are trying to make your school a better place, but are having to spend too much time sorting out the behaviour and cannot get on with running your school. We need to make sure that the school gets all of the help it needs so that you can make better progress. Most importantly, we want to make sure that those of you who cannot cope in lessons are given the right sort of help so that you can improve your behaviour and enjoy learning.

There are some good things about your school. Provision in English is helping you get better at reading and writing. You know your personal and social targets and this is great, as is the way the school is helping you make healthier and safer choices. We have asked the school to do the following things:

- Ensure that senior staff give sufficient time to making the required improvements to the school.
- Check more often how well you are learning so that the school can set itself some targets and make sure that your lessons are not too easy or too hard.
- Help those of you who find it difficult to manage and improve your behaviour.
- Find a way to improve the way lessons are organised for some of you who are unsettled by moving to different rooms.
- Make sure that you are helped to understand what you need to do to improve your own work so that you can make better progress.

You can help by trying to be kinder to each other, behaving well and working hard.

29 February 2008

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Southall School, Dawley, TF4 3PX**

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- Make sure that you are helped to understand what you need to do to improve your own work so that you can make better progress.

You can help by trying to be kinder to each other, behaving well and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Julia Coop  
Lead inspector