

# St Luke's School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126547
<b>Local Authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	315579
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Farrell

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
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	49
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rosemary Shaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zoe Lattimer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Cricklade Road Swindon SN2 7AS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 705566
<b>Fax number</b>	01793 705858

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<b>Age group</b>	11-16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Luke's School educates pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, all of whom have statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry is exceptionally low. There are only four girls in the school spread across four age groups. Nearly all pupils come from Swindon, with a very small number coming from other local authorities. Six pupils are cared for by the local authority. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Some 24% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is a high percentage, although national figures are not available for similar schools. A new headteacher took up post in January 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Luke's provides a satisfactory education, as shown in the progress pupils make in their work and personal development. Its strengths include the good leadership of its new headteacher who, with the support of senior managers, is charting a clear direction for future improvements. Older pupils make good progress because they are motivated by the opportunity to take an increasing range of qualifications, including General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. The good subject-based curriculum, enhanced by well-resourced specialist rooms and a spacious site, provides a clear framework of activities.

Parents express positive views of the school, one stating that 'I have nothing but praise for the staff.' The school's own recent survey indicates that some parents are not clear about procedures should they have any complaints, and the school has already taken steps to rectify this. Links with other agencies, including the health service and the Connexions service, are good, as are the recently improved links that have been established with the education welfare service.

The satisfactory systems of care, guidance and support for pupils include clear procedures for risk assessments and robust procedures for child protection. In the relaxed atmosphere in social times, staff and pupils relate to one another well. The effective system of target setting is beginning to contribute to raising expectations. However, partly because of a legacy of previous inconsistencies in the management of pupils' behaviour, there are too many fixed-term exclusions, especially among younger pupils.

Because of the satisfactory support and guidance, pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils' cultural development is good while their social, moral and spiritual development is satisfactory. They follow healthy lifestyles, participating well in physical activities and being aware of healthy eating options. Pupils' enjoyment of school, safety awareness and contribution to the community are satisfactory, although they contribute well to the school council. Attendance, while satisfactory, is lower than it could be, partly because of the persistent non-attendance of a few pupils.

Pupils' standards remain exceptionally low for their age because of their special educational needs, and because some have missed earlier schooling, but progress overall is satisfactory. Older pupils, motivated by opportunities for accreditation, progress well. Younger pupils do not make the same progress and achieve only satisfactorily because they adapt less well than older pupils when lessons do not actively engage them. Teaching is satisfactory and benefits from the subject specialisms of teachers and the close teamwork of teachers and specialist support assistants. The best lessons engage pupils and motivate them but, in some lessons, pupils are not active enough in their learning and there is too much reliance on textbooks.

Leadership and management throughout the school are satisfactory and the school runs smoothly day to day. Self-evaluation is over-generous but the school has correctly identified areas in which it needs to improve and strategies to do so. It is supported satisfactorily by the governors but the governing body is under strength. The school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection and has the capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions through closer coordination of strategies, including work with parents.

- Improve pupils' attendance by coordinating activities to reduce the absence of the small number of pupils who are persistently away.
- Improve progress of younger pupils in all subjects by ensuring teaching and learning is more participatory and active.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' standards are exceptionally low because of their special educational needs and, for some pupils, because of a legacy of previously missed schooling. Levels of literacy tend to be about two years behind age expectations. Nevertheless, pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils aged 11 to 14 years make satisfactory progress, even in literacy where their confidence levels on entering school are often low. They make satisfactory progress towards targets set for them. In some subjects, for example, physical education and information and communication technology, their progress is good. Older pupils aged 15 and 16 years make good progress, taking an increasing range of GCSE examinations, with some attaining in line with national standards.

There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups in the school, for example, between girls and boys, pupils in the care of the local authority and pupils assessed as having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Pupils mature in their time at the school and become increasingly able to take responsibility and behave more independently as they grow older.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' moral, social and spiritual development is satisfactory and their cultural development is good. They are generally good at adopting healthy lifestyles, taking energetic part in physical activities, benefiting from the counselling support provided by the school, and being aware of healthy eating options. St Luke's has National Healthy School status. Pupils behave satisfactorily in lessons and in less structured time around school, and are polite and friendly. This is particularly noticeable in the breakfast club, which all pupils attend before school and where staff and pupils sit together and talk in a relaxed and friendly way, making it a good start to the school day. As pupils progress through the school, they increasingly develop good workplace skills and other skills such as those in information and communication technology and through opportunities offered through links with the local college.

Pupils act in a safe manner and most of the time are aware of safety considerations. They enjoy their education and know which subjects and aspects of school they like, and which they do not. Overall, they make a satisfactory contribution to the wider local community but rightly believe they could do more. However, their participation in the school council, which has wide responsibilities, is good. Attendance is satisfactory, although lower than it could be, with a small number of pupils with long-term problems with attendance making a disproportionate contribution to absence. The provision contributes to ensuring that pupils will satisfactorily meet the challenges they face as they grow older.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The strengths of teaching are in the good relationships between staff and pupils and the close working together of teachers and specialist support assistants. The subject specialisms of staff and the well-resourced specialist areas also help ensure they are knowledgeable about their main subject area. The best teaching enlivens lessons with stimulating visual and other aids. For example, in a science lesson on reproduction for younger pupils, the enthusiasm of the teacher and vivid use of the interactive whiteboard engaged pupils' interest and they spoke sensibly and with enthusiasm about the topic. The credit economy system, in which pupils earn points for rewards, at its best works effectively to provide an incentive for pupils to achieve.

However, the predominantly satisfactory teaching misses opportunities to make lessons more active and participatory, too often depending on textbooks when active involvement could lead to better progress. For example, in mathematics lessons textbooks are sometimes used for activities such as exploring the properties of shapes that would lend themselves very well to construction activities. This particularly affects younger pupils, who find it harder to adapt and lack the extra incentives of external accreditation. Academic targets are set in all subjects and teachers know the levels at which pupils are working. Individual education plans are satisfactorily used, although sometimes the behavioural targets in them are too broad.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of subject-based activities that support their learning. In content, it suits pupils' learning needs well, but it is not always translated into teaching and learning activities that engage the pupils fully in teaching sessions, particularly affecting the progress of younger pupils. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving literacy for younger pupils, allocating time gained from disapplying pupils from modern foreign languages. Links with other schools provide a good range of sporting activities that supports their staying healthy. Courses at the local college and work experience support the range of activities for older pupils. Opportunities to achieve external accreditation are good and have been considerably widened in recent years. Residential trips effectively contribute to the social development of pupils and help develop their independence.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school's systems for caring for pupils are satisfactory. Child protection procedures are robust. Health and safety procedures are followed carefully and a range of risk assessments is in place for activities and subjects. Home-school liaison is strong and improving. At the time of the inspection, risk assessments were not carried out for individual pupils being admitted to the school, a procedure the school has now undertaken to implement. The school does much to try to improve attendance against a background of some pupils being poor attenders for a considerable period, although efforts have not always been as well coordinated as they could be. Fixed-term exclusion rates are too high and the school is again making efforts to lower these and has had some recent success, although there is more to do. Punctuality has been

improved for those who make their own way into school by the provision of the popular breakfast club.

Staff know individual pupils very well and this contributes positively to the academic support they provide. A secure system of setting targets introduced in the previous two years and applying to all subjects is increasingly enabling staff to gain a clear understanding of the levels at which pupils are working and what more they can achieve. Because of this, assessment is satisfactory and improving and the marking of pupils' work is more helpful.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher is providing good leadership; elsewhere in the school, there is satisfactory leadership and management. The school has identified the direction in which improvement should take place. For example, the headteacher has introduced a reorganisation of the staffing structure, enabling clearer roles and ensuring staff are held to account for their areas of responsibility, including improvements in teaching and learning. Training to support more consistent behaviour management is having a positive effect. A suitable system of performance management includes teachers and specialist support assistants. Administrative staff make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school.

Self-evaluation procedures, while satisfactory, are still developing and the school was too generous in its judgements of its performance, except for the curriculum and standards. The school improvement plan is not as comprehensive as it should be, but does correctly identify several main areas for improvement and strategies for dealing with them. The school recognises the improvement that needs to be made and is taking some steps to do so. For example, to reduce fixed-term exclusions, the school is ensuring procedures for involving parents are closely followed. Consequently, pupils are beginning to take the implementation of a fixed-term exclusion more seriously than previously.

The governing body offers satisfactory support to the school, acting as its critical friend, but is under strength, particularly lacking sufficient parental representation. Governors are committed to helping the school improve. Since the previous inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress, for example, in improving punctuality, developing subject leaders' skills, and improving academic reports, but it still needs to do more to reduce fixed-term exclusions. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

21 September 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Luke's School, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 7AS

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school recently.

St Luke's provides you with a satisfactory education. There are some good aspects of your school, including the new headteacher's clear view of what the school needs to do to improve and the good curriculum. The older pupils among you are taking an increasing number of GCSEs.

Also, there are some things the school could do better, so I have asked the staff to:

- Reduce the number of times pupils are excluded from school for short periods through working even more closely together and involving parents more.
- Improve your attendance.
- Improve progress of younger pupils in all subjects by making sure your lessons are more active and give you more chances to take part.

I am sure that you could help in these, for example, in trying hard to improve your attendance.

Thank you again and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Lead inspector



21 September 2007

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- Improve progress of younger pupils in all subjects by making sure your lessons are more active and give you more chances to take part.

I am sure that you could help in these, for example, in trying hard to improve your attendance.

Thank you again and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael Farrell'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'l'.

Lead inspector