

Adelaide School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131558
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	315830
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Preece HMI

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeff Welch
Headteacher	Mr L Willday
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2003
School address	Adelaide Street Crewe Cheshire CW1 3DT
Telephone number	01270 255661
Fax number	01270 584577

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Adelaide School is a special school which provides for pupils aged 11 to 16 who experience emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. All the pupils have a statement of special educational need. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and currently over a third are eligible for free school meals. There are no pupils from a minority ethnic group. A small number of the pupils are looked after by the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The inspection agrees with the school's view that this is an outstanding, vibrant and happy school. This is the result of the school's success in creating a welcoming, calm and purposeful atmosphere in which pupils are valued as individuals and treated with dignity and respect. Staff constantly look for ways to improve. A culture of success, where the achievements of all pupils are celebrated, permeates the ethos of the school. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own decisions and are able to understand the consequences of these; this reflects the school motto, 'helping young people to help themselves'. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and some lessons, where the planning is extremely well considered, are outstanding. Most pupils make at least good progress in their learning and great gains in their behaviour and social skills. The outstanding curriculum is enhanced by exceptionally strong links with local schools, colleges and businesses, which helps the school respond well to pupils' individual learning needs and contributes to their excellent personal development. Parents express great confidence in the staff.

The school is extremely well led and management at all levels is outstanding. The headteacher's vision and drive for excellence extends to all. Significant improvements have taken place since the last inspection. These achievements have been made despite pupils' needs becoming increasingly more complex. A wealth of opportunities has been created to develop pupils' literacy. Homework is now more structured and all pupils have access to the school's on-line virtual learning environment. Pupils are much more involved in their own learning and the quality of marking has improved, giving the pupils more understanding of what they need to do to improve further. Accommodation is of a high standard. Innovative use has been made of buildings, which are maintained to a very high standard. The school has an outstanding capacity to continue to develop as it meets and relishes new challenges, knows its strengths and weaknesses, and has a good track record of improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share teachers' best practice in lesson planning throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievements are good, as accurately identified by the school's self-evaluation. Because of their learning and behavioural needs, all pupils enter the school with standards that are well below what is expected for youngsters of their age. The school accurately judges that most pupils make at least good progress in their learning and make particularly great strides in their personal and social skills. This is in marked contrast to their previous experiences. Data on pupils' progress are carefully analysed and effectively used to evaluate individual achievements and the school's overall effectiveness. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils entered for national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and for external awards at the end of Key Stage 4. Impressively, all school-based pupils from last year achieved five GCSEs or equivalent passes. The range of appropriate and relevant accreditation is growing and this motivates pupils to succeed. A focus on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is successfully embedded into all lessons. Assessment processes are effective and used well; they successfully identify the ability levels of each pupil and form a basis for setting precise and measurable learning targets. Consequently, a positive climate for learning is firmly established. This is

reinforced through the frequent celebration of pupils' progress and achievements, and the high quality displays of their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding. This school transforms the lives of the young people it serves and restores their faith in themselves and their abilities. Pupils are helped to overcome past difficulties; they exude confidence and take great pride in their achievements. They are given high levels of trust and, consequently, make giant steps forward in the management of their own behaviour. There have been no permanent exclusions since the school opened nine years ago and the consistently low rate of temporary exclusions is a credit to the staff and pupils. The social ethos of the school is outstanding. Pupils are courteous, helpful and enjoy good relationships with each other and the staff. Pupils commented on feeling respected, safe and proud to be attending Adelaide School. This attitude demonstrates why pupils make such good progress. They successfully learn to get along well with each other, to respect people from different cultures and racial groups. Pupils develop independence skills through being increasingly encouraged to self-review in all aspects of school life; they are very aware of how to improve their own work.

The student council has brought about many changes such as the introduction of the school radio station, on-site climbing wall and the setting up of the new school kitchen. They were also involved in the appointment of the school cook. A parent wrote, 'my son has gained so much both academically and in his ability to become a productive member of the family and of society in general' and other parents endorsed this view. New pupils quickly settle in and flourish in the stimulating, structured environment. Every opportunity is provided to involve pupils in the local community by, for example, using leisure facilities and voluntary work in allotments and elderly people's homes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, as accurately identified in the school's self-evaluation report. Although some teaching is outstanding, there is room for improvement: the school is very aware that there is not enough sharing of good practice in the planning of lessons. The good progress that pupils make in their learning is boosted by the exceptional ethos, rigorous attention to behaviour management, and the range of activities provided. Assessment systems pick up on pupils' weaknesses quickly so that they can be helped to do even better. All pupils have additional literacy lessons. Staff know the pupils well and are very aware of their needs and sensitivities. For example, in a lesson to extend writing skills, the teacher was careful to ask for pupils' permission before their work could be read out to the rest of the class. There is good emphasis on extending pupils' learning as well as their behaviour. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and their use are excellent. Pupils are prepared well for their wider roles as young citizens and further study. Radio Adelaide is extremely popular with all pupils and with a range of local schools that also use the equipment. During the inspection, one pupil was busily engaged in teaching children from another school to speak on the radio station: he had made worksheets to help the children better understand the complex radio controls and to help them feel more confident in their use. Nearly all pupils leave school to

attend college, training or work and the staff keep in contact with them after they leave for as long as necessary to help support placements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The enrichment of the curriculum is exceptional and makes an outstanding contribution to the school's success. Pupils clearly do not want any poor behaviour or non-attendance to restrict their access to many recreational, sporting and life skills opportunities. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 3 is carefully planned and meets pupils' needs and aspirations. In Key Stage 4 the personalised learning programmes are varied and stimulating and, as a result, pupils continue to show high levels of interest and enjoy their lessons. Innovative activities, such as the school's radio station, improve pupils' social and life skills, promote their economic awareness and effectively prepare them for adult life. Business and college links are secure and provide outstanding opportunities for work-related learning. A strong focus on the work-related aspects of the curriculum provides an excellent grounding for pupils' future development and enhances their self-confidence and independence.

The curriculum promotes well pupils' enjoyment in learning and their awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise. Whilst space for leisure facilities is limited in school, very good use is made of local facilities including a gymnasium, and a football training pitch. The school has a well-used area dedicated to pool tables, and a climbing wall where pupils learn under supervision to socialise positively with staff and each other. Work with the local community as well as international links, for example with Norway, Singapore and South Africa, extend pupils' understanding of life in a culturally diverse society. They particularly enjoyed food prepared for them by a member of the local Polish community. Pupils are made aware of the need to keep themselves safe and healthy through a well-structured programme of personal, social and health education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Staff provide very good pastoral welfare and support which creates a calm and reassuring place to learn. They are dedicated and work effectively as a team to provide the individual support all pupils need. The way that pupils are greeted in the morning, the offer of breakfast where necessary, and staff being available to support pupils with issues that have arisen on the journey, all enable pupils to make the best possible start to the day. Staff liaise effectively with a range of multi-professional partners and agencies. A significant strength is the high quality and intensive support for any underachieving pupils and this is particularly strong in literacy. Parents and carers are encouraged to be fully involved in their children's progress. The unanimous view of parents is that they are pleased with the support and information they receive when their children start the school, about how well they are doing and the good transition processes in place when they leave school. There are appropriate measures for safeguarding pupils and rigorous attention is given to health and safety issues. Pupils and staff are rightly proud of their recent National Healthy School award.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school judges its leadership and management to be outstanding, a view supported by inspection. The headteacher has a clear vision and has developed an effective model of devolved leadership, which is empowering staff. The senior management team has an acute understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. There is a relentless refusal to be just satisfied and this makes Adelaide School a rare and valuable place. Staff work unstintingly towards the common goal of improving the learning opportunities for all pupils in their care. Staff share the vision for creating a 'nurturing' environment which develops the whole pupil. High expectations are set for behaviour and achievement.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learning resources successfully challenge stereotypical attitudes. There is zero tolerance of any bullying or racism, and pupils feel valued, safe and well supported in their learning. There are very good links with external agencies and the wider community, which have a high regard for the school. The school operates very smoothly on a day-to-day basis; there are clear lines of management responsibility and staff are well deployed. Self-evaluation is accurate; systematic monitoring of teaching is robust and correctly identifies strengths and ways forward. However, the evaluations of lessons do not make their strengths and weaknesses explicit. The school has been successful in gaining a variety of quality assurance awards.

School improvement planning is good and is used well to direct improvements. The local authority makes a valuable contribution to improving the school. The school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers and other stakeholders. The governors fulfil their statutory role very well with an appropriate balance of challenge and support. Value for money is excellent.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

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?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Inspection of Adelaide School, Crewe, CW1 3DT

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. You were certainly keen to tell me about all the great things that happen there and I agree with you: Adelaide School is an excellent school. These are just some of the things I found during my visit.

- When you arrive at the school the staff do a tremendous amount to help you settle in and become part of the school. What is really good is that so many of you make fantastic progress in your work and especially in your behaviour because of the help you receive and your own determination to succeed.
- Every school needs a leader and I think that you have a really special one in your headteacher. The leadership team, staff and governors are guiding and supporting you very well so that you can achieve great things.
- I asked your parents and carers for their views of your school. They have great confidence in the work of the school in caring for you and leading you to success.
- There are some brilliant opportunities to take part in exciting activities such as the radio station, work-related learning, the opportunities to work in other schools and college as well as very good support for you when you need to decide about where to go next in life.

There is one point that I have asked the school to improve. Teachers should share their best practice in lesson planning to make your learning even better.

You are rightly proud of your school and I wish you lots of success for all that you do in the future.