

Dorothy Goodman School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132154
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	315941
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Arnalena Bee

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	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	98
6th form	18
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Tony Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	Stoke Road Hinckley LE10 0EA
Telephone number	01455 634582
Fax number	01455 634582

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Dorothy Goodman is a new school that opened in September 2006. Most pupils who attend have severe or moderate learning difficulties. A few have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils are mainly from White British backgrounds. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. At present, there are no children in the Foundation Stage. The school is on a split site: pupils aged three to fourteen are on one site and the remainder of the pupils are on the other site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Dorothy Goodman is an outstanding school, which is very effective in all that it does. What is done particularly well is that all pupils are treated as very special individuals. The reason for this is that adults who work in the school value whatever the pupils say and do. Consequently, the pupils gain confidence and greatly respect everyone who helps them. As one parent wrote, 'The feedback we get from our daughter, when she talks about her school, is one of pure delight. That means everything to us'. These very positive relationships mean that pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of living healthily and staying safe through the very good opportunities provided all through the day, for example, at lunchtimes and during swimming lessons. Attendance is good despite a few pupils having complex medical difficulties that, at times, interfere with their attendance. Pupils behave extremely well and work very hard in the attractive, calm and safe environment that has been recently created for them. The move to the new building and the refurbishment of the old building has been a mammoth task that has been managed extremely well by the headteacher and his enthusiastic and dedicated team of staff and governors. The accommodation is now excellent. Leadership and management are exemplary. Paramount to everything is the outstanding way that the headteacher and his senior staff constantly check to see how well the school is doing. Governors support and challenge the school well. However, they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating how well the school is doing. As a result, capacity to improve is good rather than outstanding.

The curriculum is very stimulating and effectively organised to enable all pupils to flourish and develop a love of learning. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy every moment of their time in school. Achievement is outstanding. There are many reasons for this. In all curriculum areas, pupil performance is tracked very carefully. Teachers and support staff make sure that each day pupils' personal and academic targets are given a high priority in all that they do. As a result, most pupils achieve their challenging targets. Standards are exceptionally low because of the pupils' learning difficulties. Teaching is of a consistently high standard. Teaching and learning are always good and often outstanding. The individual support that the pupils receive from the teachers and support staff is exemplary. This ensures that they receive the guidance they need to help them achieve their best both academically and personally. In turn, this prepares them very well for when they leave school. Parents and carers are delighted with how well their children are doing. However, a few would like the opportunity to use a 'home-school' diary so that they are more informed about what their child does on a daily basis.

Pupils receive the very best care, guidance and support from the dedicated and skilled staff who work with them. Excellent links have been established with local schools and external agents. Pupils talk very enthusiastically about these links and are keen to recall the things they have learnt whilst visiting other schools and colleges.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the sixth form are very effective. As a result, the curriculum that is provided for the students, most of whom have severe learning difficulties, is expertly tailored to suit their differing needs. Progress is outstanding and students achieve accreditation in subject areas such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology

(ICT). The students make excellent progress in gaining the skills necessary for the world of work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the use of 'home-school' diaries so that all parents have the opportunity to assist their children to make even more rapid progress.
- Ensure that all governors are sufficiently aware of how well the school is doing in all aspects of its work, so that the leadership team consolidates and maintains excellent achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The progress all pupils make, both in their academic and personal development, is always good and very often outstanding. Systems to measure pupils' progress are excellent and where necessary, additional support is given to enable pupils to get back on track to reach their targets. Standards are exceptionally low because of the wide range of special educational needs. Information collected on individuals shows that pupils do so well because of the excellent curriculum provision, which is carefully individualised to suit their needs. In addition, pupils consistently receive very effective teaching. Parents are generally very pleased with how well their children are doing. One parent said it all when she wrote, 'Our daughter has made amazing progress. We are constantly thrilled to see the advances she is making in all areas'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their self-esteem increases steadily because of their achievements in all that they do. Pupils are able to discover and explore as they learn at their own level and take great delight in doing so. Their social and moral development is particularly reflected in their excellent behaviour, their care for others and their trust in those who support them. The school places good emphasis on the need to attend each day, which results in the large majority of pupils attending well. All pupils have benefited from the school's recent emphasis on the arts, including drama and dance. Most pupils enjoy outdoor activities and older pupils are proud of their achievements at the outdoor activity centre and clubs. Pupils have very good opportunities to contribute to the school, their local community and the wider world. Pupils in the lower school spoke proudly of collecting money for people who live 'a long way away' in hot places like Africa. The school council helps pupils begin to understand about making decisions and becoming good citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Parents are pleased with the terrific quality of teaching and learning their children receive. One typical parent comment was, 'The teaching is superb and my son enjoys school, which is something I thought I would never say'. In all classes, lessons are very well planned to meet

the wide range of abilities within the groups. The skilled adults who help the pupils throughout the day give very good quality support. As a result, pupils learn very effectively as they develop academic and personal skills. Teaching aids to promote learning are used expertly. The spoken word is generally accompanied by skilled signing or the expert use of symbols or pictures. This enables pupils to gain clearer understanding and more confidence as they learn. Pupils know how well they are getting on because adults who work with them are constantly telling them. Detailed records of how well individual pupils are learning are conscientiously filled in by staff and clearly show the very good progress that pupils make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is totally inclusive and staff carefully individualise it to suit the needs of all pupils. There is excellent provision for pupils to gain life skills, basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, as well as personal and social skills. This enables pupils to gain confidence in all that they do. In addition, the curriculum is broadened by a good focus on all other National Curriculum subjects, visits out to places of interest and excellent links with local businesses, college and schools. Consequently, a very large proportion of pupils join their friends in mainstream classes to learn and older pupils in Key Stage 4 have very good opportunities to take part in work experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The outstanding level of care, guidance and support provided for the pupils is an important factor in their success at school. All staff are very well trained. There are excellent links with a range of support agencies to help provide for specific needs. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and robust. Pupils' personal welfare is excellent. All adults are very aware of the difficulties the pupils have and support them very well so that they achieve their personal targets. Academic guidance is outstanding and ensures that pupils achieve as well as they can. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are well established and used very effectively throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher has an excellent idea of how well the school is doing, its strengths and what could be developed further. Systems for monitoring and evaluating are very thorough and quickly identify when something needs improving. The monitoring of teaching is excellent and clearly shows how and where performance has been improved. Self-evaluation is particularly effective but, at present, not all governors are sufficiently involved in the process.

Senior leaders have successfully developed new systems and structures in both the upper and lower school to enable this new school to run smoothly. For example, curriculum groups have been recently set up. Within these groups, subject leaders on both sites now work effectively

together. They have got off to a good start in a short time and are beginning to focus well on achievement in their subject areas. Parents are supportive of the school and feel that it is very well led and managed. As one parent wrote, 'The environment is welcoming and caring and we feel very honoured that our child is educated in such a fantastic school'.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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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	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

14 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dorothy Goodman School, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 0EA

You may remember we came to visit your school to see how you were getting on. Thank you for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing what fun you have in school. We think your behaviour is excellent and that you are very kind to each other. We think your school is excellent.

I am writing to let you know what we liked best about your school.

- You all learn very well because teaching is excellent.
- The teachers and the other people who help you, plan activities that really suit your individual needs very well.
- You are looked after and cared for very well, and the people who look after you at home agree.
- Your school is very well led and managed.
- The teachers and the other people who help you plan lots of extra things for you to do outside school.
- By the time you leave you have made very good progress learning skills that will help you in the world of work.

We have asked the school to do two things to make it even better.

- Check that the people who look after you at home are told what you have been doing whilst you are in school.
- Make sure that all the governors, who help to run the school, are more involved in checking how well the school is getting on.

Keep working hard and having fun as you learn and play in your lovely school.

Best wishes

Nina Bee Lead inspector

Annex B

14 September 2007

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Nina Bee
Lead inspector