

Sherbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124514
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	319530
Inspection date	4 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Heighway
Headteacher	Sarah Ashley
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2002
School address	Brunswick Road Cannock WS11 5SA
Telephone number	01543 510216
Fax number	01543 510222

Age group	2-11
Inspection date	4 March 2008
Inspection number	319530

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sherbrook is a relatively new, generic special school which provides for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple disabilities. A significant number of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Formally, as Beecroft Hill School, the school provided for pupils up to the age of 19 years. The provision was redesignated for primary-aged children, including those in the Foundation Stage, and the new school became operational in January 2007. Primary-aged pupils from another Staffordshire special school were included in the new provision. The existing headteacher of Beecroft Hill was appointed as headteacher of the newly created primary school. Almost all the pupils are of White British origin. About one in five of the pupils is eligible for free school meals.

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 where all the pupils achieve well in their studies and a few make excellent progress. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve equally well and get off to a good start in their education. Pupils love coming to school and parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing they will be safe and happy and that the school has high expectations of their success. One parent's comment was typical: 'My child has made excellent progress in all aspects of his education'. Pupils' achievements are underpinned by the good progress they make in their personal development.

Pupils thrive within the caring and supportive ethos of the school. The youngest children, in the Nursery and Reception provision, quickly learn routines and settle well into school life. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is good. They learn to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave well. The pupils feel very secure and well supported. They value the school and this is evident through the very good relationships they have with staff and their very good attendance

The pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. The teaching is good because lessons are interesting and well managed. The classroom staff know pupils' attainment very well and this enables them to work productively with pupils to enhance their learning. The assessment and recording of the pupils' small steps in progress is very well managed. Teachers throughout the school effectively adapt learning activities to the individual needs of the pupils and this has a significant impact on their progress. However, the effectiveness of academic support and guidance could sometimes be improved by ensuring that pupils have their learning targets explained to them. The provision is enriched by the many well-planned opportunities for pupils to interact with the community and the good programmes to improve the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

The headteacher's experience, her clear vision and her commitment to the pupils and staff have enabled her to maintain standards through a significant period of change as the new school was established. She receives good support from competent senior managers and a committed staff team. The pupils' progress is monitored closely and teachers have a good overview of their achievements. The senior team is aware, however, that the systems to collect and evaluate assessment and performance data could be improved so staff can more easily make good use of the information. The governing body is very supportive and provides satisfactory strategic leadership. Governors are beginning to challenge the school's leadership more effectively as procedures to monitor the school's work are put in place. The school evaluates its own work accurately. It is well set to build on the good progress made since the last inspection and there is a good capacity further to improve provision.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding and outstanding progress in their personal development because of the effective provision. Teachers and support staff know the children very well. They adapt activities skilfully to meet the needs of each child and, as a result, children enjoy their work and try their best. The classroom is a calm, happy place because the children feel safe and routines are well established. Staff maintain excellent relationships with children. They are warm and encouraging while managing children's behaviour

very well. All staff make every effort to work in a productive partnership with parents. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. There are good procedures for children's transition into the main school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Simplify the collection and recording of performance data to make it easier for teachers to monitor the progress of each pupil.
- Ensure that pupils always understand the learning targets, which are intended to help them improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All the pupils achieve well and a few make outstanding progress. Although many pupils enter the Foundation Stage with low levels of attainment, they make good progress, and this gives them a flying start when they join the main school. Although pupils' attainment remains generally well below national standards, they make consistent progress throughout their time at the school. Pupils with ASD achieve well in their communication. Other pupils with profound and multiple difficulties make good progress in tiny steps across a range of personal skills. Pupils with additional needs, such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, achieve well because of the good support they are given to overcome the barriers to their learning. All pupils make good progress in meeting challenging targets in their personal skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' progress in all aspects of their personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good and reflects the school's strong emphasis on moral and social values. There are well-planned activities where pupils learn about their own and other cultures. They develop a very good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles through the many opportunities to take part in physical activity. They make good gains in their social skills, especially in their tolerance of and desire to help less mobile or articulate children. This is because adults provide excellent role models for them. Pupils contribute to the well-being of everyone at the school through, for example, the opportunities provided by the school council. Encouraged by staff, the pupils practise their personal skills throughout the day in all their activities, as they work and play. The pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy and this helps them to develop better independence skills. Pupils feel safe and confident, and know what is expected from them within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. They are adamant that there is no bullying or intimidation at school. Parents confirm that their children really enjoy their learning. One parent wrote, 'She gets highly upset when she can't go to school due to holidays'. This is reflected in the pupils' excellent attendance and positive attitudes to school, which have a substantial impact on their achievements. Parents who returned questionnaires had high praise for the school and its impact on their children's lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and their assistants have a good understanding of their pupils' overall ability and this enables them to work effectively with small groups or individuals. Pupils receive a high level of support and this has a positive impact on their achievement. Planning for lessons is good because teachers efficiently record each small step in the pupils' progress and consequently their pupils' learning targets are well focused. These targets are, however, not explained clearly to pupils. The pupils like their teachers and the support staff, and so respond very well in lessons. Teachers motivate pupils effectively through interesting and well-paced activities. Pupils with communication difficulties and those with profound and multiple difficulties are able to take a full part in classroom activities because staff provide suitable visual clues and make good use of facilities to enable the pupils to learn through sensory experiences. The management of behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils understand and respond well to the clear routines, and this assists in keeping a strong focus on learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets requirements and it is significantly enriched by frequent trips and events. This adds considerably to the pupils' enjoyment of school. All pupils, including those with additional difficulties, are fully included in activities. Programmes in personal, social and health education underpin much of the school's work. These have a significant impact on pupils' personal skills, their understanding of following a healthy lifestyle and about their own safety. There are effective programmes in basic skills, especially since teachers add rigour to their planning by making good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Learning activities are generally well matched to the abilities and interests of individual pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The physical and emotional care of pupils is very good. There are rigorous safeguarding procedures, such as child protection procedures and checks on staff, and these help to ensure the school is a safe and happy place. Parents find this reassuring and pupils greatly appreciate it. Pupils make good progress in their social and moral skills and in developing their confidence to make independent choices. Pupils have very good relationships with staff and look to them as trusted providers of guidance and support. Pupils are made aware when they have produced good work but their learning targets are often not made clear enough for them to understand how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior staff have maintained consistency through a period of change and they have successfully led a staff team which helps all pupils to thrive and achieve well, and which is committed to seeking improvement. Resources are well used and the school gives good value for money. Managers at all levels have a good

grasp of the school's strengths and where there needs to be improvement. Senior staff have a clear overview of pupils' progress because their achievements are closely monitored. Leaders are aware, however, that procedures need to be simplified so that teachers can more quickly access the relevant information. Governors provide willing support to the school but their effectiveness is limited because they have not yet fully developed efficient ways to monitor the school's work.

Communication within the school is excellent. The staff feel fully consulted, involved and valued. The quality of professional training is good and clearly linked to the performance management of teachers and other staff. This has made a significant contribution to sustaining consistency in the good quality of teaching and, in turn, pupils' good achievement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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	2
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	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

- Not long ago we came to your school to see how you were getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make the school better. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed meeting some of you in the classrooms and at lunchtime. Thank you and well done. We were only with you for one day. That was long enough for us to realise that you go to a good school. We could see that you all enjoy school very much. We liked many things. Here are a few.
- You work hard and make good progress in your work and in your personal development.
- You have a good range of activities, particularly those that help you become independent and make choices.
- Your teachers and the many different people at the school look after you well.
- Lessons are interesting and you are well taught. This means you enjoy learning and do your best.
- Your school is well run. To help you even further, I have asked the school to make easier to understand the information they collect about you and tell you more clearly the things they want you to learn. You can help, too, just by going on working as hard as you have been doing! Please thank your parents for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.



5 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sherbrook Primary School, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 5SA

Not long ago we came to your school to see how you were getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make the school better. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed meeting some of you in the classrooms and at lunchtime. Thank you and well done.

We were only with you for one day. That was long enough for us to realise that you go to a good school. We could see that you all enjoy school very much. We liked many things. Here are a few.

- You work hard and make good progress in your work and in your personal development.
- You have a good range of activities, particularly those that help you become independent and make choices.
- Your teachers and the many different people at the school look after you well.
- Lessons are interesting and you are well taught. This means you enjoy learning and do your best.
- Your school is well run.

To help you even further, I have asked the school to make easier to understand the information they collect about you and tell you more clearly the things they want you to learn. You can help, too, just by going on working as hard as you have been doing!

Please thank your parents for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes to you all

Melvyn Blackband
Lead inspector