

Delamere School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106394
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	324390
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael McDowell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	72
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Lord
Headteacher	Mrs S Nichols
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Irlam Road Flixton Urmston Manchester Lancashire M41 6AP
Telephone number	0161 7475893

Age group	2–11
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Inspection number	324390

Fax number

0161 7472960

Age group	2-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Delamere is for children from the borough of Trafford who have statements of special educational needs because of their severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and, in a significant minority of cases, autism. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. Most are White British but about a third come from minority ethnic backgrounds, chiefly Asian British Pakistani and Asian British Indian. A small number of children are looked after by the local authority. In the case of 17 children English is not their home language. In its Nursery the school makes provision for children from age 2, most of whom attend half- time, to have their special educational needs fully assessed. The school has the Healthy School Award and has recently gained the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Delamere is an outstanding school. When, at the start of each school day, pupils are greeted by the staff, they show through their smiles and contentment what they are unable to say: 'We are happy to be back!' Almost without exception parents praise the school and credit it with helping their children to become more manageable, more sociable and better able to make their needs and feelings known.

Owing to the nature of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils' standards are very much below those expected for their age and all are working below Level 1 of the National Curriculum. However, because of expert teaching, pupils' achievement is consistently outstanding. Useful communication skills and positive attitudes to learning are carefully cultivated in the Early Years Foundation Stage and these serve the pupils well later on. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils with the highest capabilities achieve exceptionally well in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics and science. They make good progress in writing in relation to their capabilities. Those with the lowest starting points make small, but significant and measurable gains overall.

Personal development is excellent. Pupils love to attend school and do so whenever they are not prevented by illness or for medical reasons. Attendance is good. In many lessons pupils are given opportunities to choose and they make excellent use of their developing communication skills to make their preferences known. It is evident from their demeanour that they feel safe and trust the staff. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers have excellent knowledge of how best to reach their pupils and stimulate them to learn. Lessons are made interesting and enjoyable by the fullest use of resources, including information and communication technology and the enthusiasm of the staff, all of whom are happy to dance, to sign, to sing and use toys, dolls and puppets to engage their pupils. The curriculum is excellent. It is carefully tailored to pupils' specific needs and meets the academic and personal requirements of learners very well.

The staff make the safety of their pupils their first priority and the school gives its pupils outstanding care, guidance and support. The physical well-being of pupils is looked after very well. There is a school nurse, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists on site. Teachers work hard to encourage their pupils to recognise and take the next step in their learning.

Leadership and management are exceptional. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is better than it was and standards of achievement have been raised. There are comprehensive systems to monitor the school's provision and performance. This has enabled it to set highly relevant priorities for development and challenging performance targets. The school is firmly committed to equality of opportunity. This is shown particularly in its willingness to share expertise and resources with other schools in the area. It has made very good progress in promoting community cohesion. Pupils are involved in community endeavours within school and the locality to the greatest extent possible. Governance is exemplary. The governors are supportive but also hold the school to account. Under its present leadership the school is excellently placed to continue to improve. It provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are referred to the Nursery from the age of 2. The school liaises closely with parents and carers and makes very careful arrangements for each child's induction. Very good preparatory work helps to ensure that children settle in quickly and get off to the best start. The achievement of children in the Nursery is excellent. They quickly make significant gains especially in communication, language and literacy, personal and social development and physical development. They respond very well to the routines of the Nursery. They begin to develop means of making their needs or ideas known to others. Throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage children build very well on their Nursery experience. They are carefully nurtured and guided but have many opportunities to choose, and the balance of child chosen and adult led activities is right. Very good use is made of the outdoor space which presently is somewhat limited but for which plans for improvement are at an advanced stage. By the time they finish the Reception Year the excellent progress children have made is very evident and they are confident and sociable learners. These exceptional outcomes are brought about by outstanding teaching. Staff observe the children very closely and comprehensively record their progress. They are therefore well placed to guide their learning. There is excellent support for children's personal development and well-being. Arrangements for children's welfare are first-rate. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and it is managed exceptionally well.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no major areas for improvement. The school is fully aware of the most important matters that it must address to develop further and is already taking successful steps to address these.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress from their very low starting points and reach or surpass the challenging targets set for them. Throughout their time at school those with the most profound learning difficulties continue to work at levels in which the small gains they make can only be discerned by the keenest observation. Their progress is accurately measured against a scale sufficiently differentiated to register their achievements. These are exceptional. Their growing social awareness, their response to others and their development of communication by a variety of means are all excellent. Pupils with severe but less profound learning difficulties also do extremely well. Over Key Stage 1 and 2 they make at least the gains predicted and a high proportion do much better than this, especially in speaking, listening and reading. Because of a range of impairments that affect their hand control or their senses, pupils' progress in writing is often slower but is still good in relation to their capabilities. They also make exceptional progress in mathematics and science. Pupils with complex learning difficulties including autistic spectrum disorders develop reliable communication skills chiefly through the use of picture exchange. Their progress overall is likewise outstanding. There are no significant differences in achievement between girls and boys or minority and majority ethnic groups. Children looked after by the local authority do as well as others. The great majority of children cannot speak at all when they first come to the school and picture and sign are always used to reinforce teachers' talk. Therefore, the learning of the few with a home language other than English is not adversely affected.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils are helped to eat a healthy diet and to be as active as they can. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are given many opportunities to be sociable and helpful. It is evident that they enjoy these. They love the 'Hello' sessions at the beginning of morning and afternoon school. They recognise pictures of their class mates and greet them with whole-hearted singing. Pupils with profound and complex difficulties show remarkable spontaneity. They laugh when the time comes to let go of the springy 'friendship circle' they are holding so that it flies across the room; they make choices in their PE lesson about the music they wish to dance to. All pupils are very proud of the tasks they carry out such as returning the class register to the office or helping with recycling. Their contribution to the school and wider community is exceptional. A very positive indication of their developing spirituality is found in their high level of engagement when they listen to and play music. Pupils are very interested in others both in their own community and across the world. Recently they explored Australia's 'Red Centre', the area around Alice Springs, through the means of a themed week. Behaviour is excellent. Any challenging behaviours that do occur arise purely from the nature of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities and are well managed so that the learning of others is not interrupted. Their excellent progress in acquiring social, communication and self-help skills prepares them extremely well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers' management of their classrooms and their use of time is excellent. They carefully observe their pupils and keep records of pupils' progress that are of the highest quality. Consequently, they know their pupils very well. Many pupils are 'hard to reach'. However, staff are highly skilled in finding the best ways to help them to learn. For those pupils who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties teachers plan excellent activities that engage all of the pupils' senses. For pupils with autistic spectrum disorders this approach is appropriately modified to take account of pupils' preferred learning style and known aversions. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants make excellent use of a variety of communication systems including pictures and symbols. They 'sign-along' to support the spoken word. They praise pupils' efforts in exemplary fashion and encourage them towards their next step in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is exemplary in meeting individual needs. Each pupil has an individual plan that sets out very clearly their next steps in learning. Work on the subjects of the curriculum is presented through topics. This helps to make learning more meaningful. There is an excellent and necessary emphasis on the development of communication, socialisation and self-help skills. The school has a high degree of understanding of the particular needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. This is shown in the programmes that are offered to them. Pupils' personal development is very well catered for. Provision for music is innovative and for physical education it is particularly good. There is very good provision to promote community cohesion through pupils' involvement with other schools,

the church and local businesses. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a broad range of visiting musicians and performers, by visits to the theatre and concerts, and by residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The staff make the welfare of pupils their first priority. At all levels they work hard to provide them with a clean and safe environment. Pupils' personal care is sensitively handled. Due regard is given to hygiene requirements and to the dignity and privacy of the children. Child protection procedures are well established and regularly reviewed. All staff members are aware of their responsibilities to pupils and are vigilant. Risk assessments are made and pupils have personal medical plans. There is excellent liaison with other agencies to ensure that the medical, therapeutic and social needs of pupils are met. The school rigorously watches over its most vulnerable pupils and marshals additional support for them when necessary. Progress is very thoroughly monitored and pupils' individual plans set challenging but achievable targets. Pupils' learning is strongly supported and they are guided extremely well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Excellent leadership has enabled the school to build further upon the good and outstanding qualities referred to in the last inspection report. The staff are at one with the leadership in their understanding of what the school must do to maintain and further improve its very high standards. In its development plan the school has accurately identified the most important areas. These include building on excellent existing practice to make sure that work with pupils with more profound and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities continues to be at the cutting edge. The school is strongly committed to inclusion. Resources are used efficiently and effectively to raise achievement. There are links with other schools so that pupils have a chance to learn alongside their age peers. As part of its exceptional promotion of community cohesion, the school also helps other local special schools to be more inclusive. It provides opportunities for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties to join in classes at Delamere so that they improve their personal development and self-esteem. Excellent tracking procedures help the leadership keep a close eye on the progress of all groups of pupils. The school's self-review is accurate. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. The great majority of parents hold the school in high regard, say that it keeps them well informed and that it considers them as partners in their children's education. A very small minority of parents expressed dismay at a recent reduction in hydro-therapy sessions. This, however, is the result of the retirement of a therapist and the appointment of a replacement is not in the control of the school. A letter sent to parents makes this clear.

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	1
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

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I really enjoyed inspecting your school. You were very friendly when I met you in your classrooms and as you moved around the school to do the important jobs such as taking registers to the office. I could tell by the way you happily joined in your lessons, smiled and laughed that you enjoy being in school. You behave very well indeed.

From seeing your lessons, talking to your teachers and hearing what your parents or carers say I am sure that Delamere is an outstanding school. You make excellent progress in all your work. You try to help others and are kind. It is clear that you feel safe in school, enjoy healthy food and like to be as active as you can. You are taught very well and given interesting and exciting things to do. You are very carefully looked after and kept safe. Your school is led and managed extremely well. Your headteacher and staff know exactly what to do to keep it as good as it is and to improve it further.

I hope all of you continue to enjoy your time at school.