

Kelford School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106968
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	324498
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	91
Sixth form	23
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 David Trickett
Headteacher	Mr Nick Whittaker
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Oakdale Road Kimberworth Rotherham South Yorkshire S61 2NU
Telephone number	01709 512088

Age group	2–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties or complex needs. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. The majority have severe learning difficulties. The minority have either moderate learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Around one third of pupils have additional visual or hearing impairments. There are fewer girls than boys. A higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Ten of the pupils are looked after by the local authority. There are 11 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has achieved the Sportsmark Award and the National Healthy Schools Standard. It is part of a 'soft federation' with another special school. This is referred to in this report as Kelford's partner school.

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. It has a number of outstanding features, one of which is the enormous enjoyment pupils derive from their time at Kelford. Photographs of pupils being 'good friends' light up the classrooms and corridors. 'My child would be at school every day if he could', commented one parent. Pupils like many aspects of the school including their work in lessons. Their extremely positive attitudes contribute to their good progress and well-being throughout the school, from the EYFS to the sixth form.

Compared with those in mainstream schools, standards are exceptionally low, owing to pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Teachers match tasks carefully to what each pupil needs to learn next. To do this, they make effective use of the wealth of information gathered about, for example, pupils' stages of development, preferred means of communication, and the best ways to manage their behaviour or physical needs. However, the time available for learning is not always used to the full when, for instance, pupils spend too long listening to adults or when activities run on for longer than necessary.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Systems to ensure pupils' safety are exceptionally thorough and well organised. Parents very much appreciate this attention to detail. One neatly summed up Kelford's approach by observing, 'It puts children's welfare above all else'. The school's outstanding partnerships with a host of agencies and professionals enhance its work significantly. Pupils learn to be aware of their own safety and know that they should let an adult know if they are sad or worried.

Personal development is good. Physical education is a particularly strong feature of the good quality curriculum. It is an aspect that pupils enjoy very much and is a key element in their extremely good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They are very keen to join in lunchtime and after-school activities such as football and dance. Learning opportunities often take place beyond the school and pupils are frequently out and about. They learn to communicate with unfamiliar people and tackle new experiences with confidence. The skills they develop help to prepare pupils well for their lives beyond school and enable them to make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. The school council is very active and influential, successfully lobbying for improvements to facilities such as outdoor play areas.

Although the quality of leadership and management is good overall, the headteacher's leadership is outstanding. The rigour and professionalism he brings serve as inspirations to staff, who share his sky-high aspirations for each pupil and the school. Resources are used effectively and efficiently. Systems to monitor and evaluate the school's performance provide a highly accurate view of strengths and where more development is needed. As a result, for example, work is underway to improve the sixth form curriculum, which does not currently offer students more than an adequate range of opportunities. The very strong support of the deputy headteacher, core senior leadership team and governors helps to ensure that Kelford is well able to maintain the good rate of improvement achieved since the previous inspection. No wonder one parent remarked that 'The headteacher should be proud of his staff and school'.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

During their years in the sixth form, students achieve well. They make good progress in important aspects of learning such as English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education and in the other courses they follow. All students are successful in modules of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Towards Independence course, gaining recognition for their work in topics including multi-sensory experiences and horticulture. Some higher attaining students are awarded Entry Level certificates, for example, in mathematics. Teaching is good. Staff treat students as young adults, encouraging them to develop their social skills and grow in confidence. As a result, students are very ready to take on responsibilities such as distributing fruit to other classes. The curriculum is satisfactory. College links enable students to gain useful skills in areas such as painting and decorating and help to prepare them for moving on after they leave school. Students use community facilities such as a sports centre, and work and socialise with sixth formers from the partner school. The sixth form is well led and managed. Effective steps have been taken to improve it since the last inspection. Its leaders have very high expectations and are not content with the current curriculum because, for example, students do not have any choice regarding the courses they undertake. Leaders are working with determination to increase the scope of opportunities and match them more closely to each student's present and future needs.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents are pleased with and proud of the good progress their children make across all areas of learning. Staff make good use of information from parents and carers about children's needs and preferences. Together with flexible starting arrangements and the recent development of a class for the newest admissions, this ensures that children settle quickly and start learning at once. Teaching is good. Members of the classroom teams work closely together and share high expectations for children to achieve. Very warm relationships support children's good personal development. Learning opportunities are well organised and take good account of children's stages of development. They have daily sessions of outdoor learning, using the stimulating environment and resources in all but the worst weather. On a cold day, children selected hats and scarves and then had great fun choosing to pull or ride wheeled toys or played with staff and practised walking or stretching. These outdoor activities contribute significantly to children's very good progress in physical development. Children are cared for exceptionally well. Leadership and management are good. The two teachers ensure that day to day systems run smoothly and for the benefit of children. Assessments of learning are detailed and useful. Teaching assistants are increasingly involved in gathering this information.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching makes consistently good use of the time available for learning.
- Develop the sixth form curriculum to provide a broader range of opportunities tailored closely to students' needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Comparisons of assessment information from the last two years show that standards are rising. The data also reveal that pupils made faster progress in the year ending July 2008 than during the previous year, owing to improvements in teaching. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Progress is often especially good in physical education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) in line with the quality of opportunities in these areas. Pupils with the most complex needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties and sensory impairments, make consistently good progress. Although good overall, rates of progress tend to be more variable for average or higher attaining pupils. Pupils who are looked after by the local authority and those in the early stages of learning English achieve as well as other pupils with similar learning needs. The relatively small numbers of girls perform as well as boys. Fewer pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are now taught in a separate class, indicating that these pupils also make good progress. A few pupils achieve so well that they join lessons in mainstream schools. Progress is equally good during the primary and secondary years. By the end of Year 11, students gain accreditation through the ASDAN Transition Challenge award.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They take great pleasure in the achievements of their friends. Older pupils and sixth form students applauded spontaneously when one group was awarded a certificate for behaving well during lunch. Even though a few need significant help, for example, because they find it hard to cope with changes, behaviour is good overall. Pupils learn how to conduct themselves in different situations, laughing and playing exuberantly in leisure time and listening carefully during lessons. They show increasing maturity because staff invest time in encouraging pupils to share their feelings and consider the impact of their actions. Attendance is in line with that of pupils in similar schools. From undertaking classroom jobs and leading lunchtime activities to raising funds for charities, pupils are always ready to help others. They collaborate very well with pupils from other backgrounds, as members of Kelford's signing choir or during activities in other schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Plenty of praise and encouragement successfully motivate pupils to try hard and cooperate. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. They make sure that pupils are aware of these intentions so they know to focus their efforts on key ideas and skills. Lessons are interesting which is why pupils enjoy their work so much. Resources and approaches are chosen carefully to meet the needs of particular pupils. Pupils with visual impairments enjoy feeling the textures of different fabrics while others with autistic spectrum disorders benefit from an environment that does not stimulate their senses too much. Pupils are each encouraged to communicate in the way that suits them best, with plenty of time allowed for them to make their responses. Staff teamwork is highly effective and teaching assistants make very strong contributions to learning. However,

on occasions, learning slows because, for example, there are not enough changes of activity or the transition from one task to the next takes too long and pupils wait to start work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has recently revised much of its curriculum. As a result, a good range of learning opportunities meet pupils' varied and changing needs well as they move up the school to Year 11. Increasingly, themes, such as 'Changes', link subjects together. These make learning interesting and relevant and enable pupils to practise skills and apply learning in different contexts. There are a number of examples of pupils learning alongside those from other schools. For example, Year 11 students from a specialist language college planned and led a very successful 'French day' enabling younger pupils to learn about another culture. Pupils have good opportunities to be creative, winning competitions with their films and podcasts. Enterprise activities are becoming established. The oldest pupils and sixth form students take part in a project with the partner school, learning about topics including catering and marketing. There are good quality lunchtime activities and after-school clubs. Residential visits promote personal development and new skills as pupils, including those who use wheelchairs, tackle considerable challenges such as abseiling and canoeing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Current government safeguarding requirements are met. Child protection procedures are securely in place. The school's business manager oversees the arrangements for health and safety ensuring, for example, that potential risks are assessed rigorously and minimised. A senior leader heads a team of specialist support workers. These are responsible for coordinating support for groups of pupils such as those with sensory needs or those who are bilingual. This is an excellent approach to sharing information amongst team members, class teams and other agencies. Pastoral support plans for every pupil bring together a range of information, for example, about approaches to managing behaviour or safely transferring pupils from one position to another. Pupils' personal care needs are met discreetly by a specialist staff team. Parents and carers are supported either individually or through courses in topics such as signing, so they can help their children continue learning when at home. Pupils' progress towards their challenging targets is tracked carefully.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The recently reorganised leadership structure provides opportunities for more staff to play significant roles in the school. A notable strength is the way in which the headteacher has devised systems to develop leadership skills in the senior team and subject leaders. This means that roles are fulfilled increasingly well and tasks can be delegated more widely. Staff very much appreciate being encouraged to introduce and develop new ideas and approaches. They frequently work in small groups to tackle tasks such as identifying key words that the whole school is now learning to sign. The school works hard and successfully to enable all groups of pupils to have equal opportunities to achieve. Care is taken to meet the needs of girls, for instance, and checks are made on the progress of different groups of pupils. Kelford makes a good contribution to community cohesion. As a result, pupils relish being part of the school

and wider community, accepting and enjoying the differences they notice in the people they meet. Governance is good. Governors are prepared to ask challenging questions, for example, to help to ensure the school provides good value for money.

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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	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?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2	
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2	
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2	
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2	
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1	
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2	

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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?	2	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	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
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	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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	

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

Thank you for being so friendly and kind when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you all. The school councillors were very helpful, so special thanks go to them. You told me that you like school a lot. I agree with you that Kelford is a good school.

There are some outstanding things about your school. You all help to make it a happy place and you know how to be healthy. The adults take excellent care of you.

You learn a lot, because you have good teaching. I have asked the school to make sure you are busy working all the time in lessons, so you learn even more. You said that you like work!

Most of you have plenty of interesting things to do. The sixth form students don't have as many different courses as students do in some other schools. I am pleased that your teachers are already thinking of new ways for the sixth formers to learn.

Your headteacher and all the adults work very hard to make Kelford such a good school. I want to send them and each one of you my best wishes for the future.