

New Fosseway School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109393
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	324952
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Sarah Mascall

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	6–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	62
Sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Button
Headteacher	Judy Baker
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2005
School address	New Fosseway Road Hengrove Bristol BS14 9LN
Telephone number	01179 030220
Fax number	01179 030221

Age group	6–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

New Fosseway provides for pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities including severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are a small number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds although a very small number come from different ethnic groups.

Pupils enter school with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age and because of the nature of their special needs, standards when they start school are very low.

The school has been through a very difficult period as a result of staff sickness particularly amongst senior staff. The acting headteacher took on the role in January 2008 and the deputy headteacher, who is on a fixed term contract, took up post in September 2008. There has been an acting head of primary since April 2008.

The school is due to move to new premises in July 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

New Fosseway is a good school. Through very determined and strong leadership the acting headteacher, with the support of her leadership team, has not only maintained standards but moved the school forward. There is a real sense of teamwork throughout the school. This factor has done much to support staff through a difficult time and has ensured that the school is a cheerful, caring place where pupils are happy to be. There is little doubt how much pupils like school and their smiling faces when they arrive in the mornings are proof of this. They and their parents and carers confirm how much they enjoy going to school and this is reflected in pupils' excellent attendance. Many parents commented positively about the dedication of the staff and the focus on improving pupils' life skills. The good curriculum contributes much to pupils' personal and social skills and to their enjoyment of school. It is well planned to ensure a good balance of experiences throughout the school.

Achievement and progress are good overall. In several aspects of their learning many pupils make outstanding progress. Most pupils make particularly good progress in their reading, writing and number work because teachers ensure that work is well matched to individual needs. However this is not consistent for all and for a few pupils progress in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory rather than good. This is because in some of the teaching pupils' literacy and numeracy targets are not consistently well used in planning and consequently activities are not always well matched to pupils' individual needs. The high quality teamwork between teachers and support staff means that lessons run smoothly, with support staff confident to step in wherever and whenever they are needed. Teaching is well focused on pupils' personal and social development and the development of their communication skills. As a result pupils often make at least good progress in their personal skills targets. These targets are well displayed in classrooms and many pupils know what they have to do to improve.

The care and welfare of pupils is given a very high priority by all staff and care, guidance and support are good overall. The strong links with multi-agencies to support pupils' well-being are effective and ensure pupils get a very good level of support. As a result pupils make good progress in their personal development. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the support they receive from the school and many comment on the very good levels of communication they have with staff. The effective procedures to help pupils manage their behaviours ensure that the school is a safe place and behaviour is good. Pupils make the most of the opportunities to be involved in sport and have a good awareness of how to stay healthy and eat sensibly. There is a good sense of community and pupils are very supportive of each other. They are encouraged throughout the school to take responsibility and through good quality sixth form provision this is built upon effectively. Their growing independence and very sensible attitudes ensure that they are well prepared for life when they leave school.

Senior leaders have been effective in improving teachers' use of assessment. This has enabled them to establish a good bank of data on pupil progress. Senior staff have been quick to iron out the glitches in recording and analysis. As a result they are more confident in the data they now have and are using it to drive forward improvements. Although the school has set itself challenging targets these are not always clearly measurable. This sometimes makes it difficult for staff and governors to ensure that the targets have been achieved effectively and are improving outcomes for pupils. The commitment of staff and governors to provide the best for pupils and their high expectations for pupils ensure that the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The Post-16 provision is well led. There are high expectations of what students can do and staff are unwilling to accept second best from any student. As a result students achieve well. There is an appropriate focus on accreditation and an expectation that pupils will achieve at least six modules within ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). Students are aware of their targets and are keen to make sure staff record their achievements. They have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve and make good progress in their learning. Students benefit from good and often outstanding teaching which is imaginative and challenging. Tasks are often practical and encourage students to think for themselves. Occasionally, especially for those students with more complex needs, the pace of learning slows when they have to wait for each student to experience an activity. Lessons though are age appropriate and often use humour to enhance enjoyment. The curriculum provides good opportunities to enable students to become independent and students clearly enjoy the variety of activities they can be involved in. Staff recognise the need to enhance these further and have planned a wider range of activities for the forthcoming move to the new site. Appropriate links with a local college as well as good work placements and opportunities to understand the world of work ensure that students have a good understanding of life when they leave school. Work experience, college placements and opportunities to attend agricultural and horticultural facilities all support students extremely well. Students are expected to take on more responsibilities and these they do sensibly, whether putting chairs out in assembly, going out to buy ingredients for lunch or getting the registers for different classes. Very good attention is paid to health and safety and all activities are monitored closely. The care, guidance and support of students is good and supports their personal development well. They develop into young adults who have a good sense of self-worth and confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers make better use of pupils' literacy and numeracy targets when planning activities so that work is better matched to each pupil's individual needs.
- Ensure that targets are measurable, so that staff and governors can always clearly establish the school's progress against them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From very low starting points and regardless of their learning difficulties and disabilities, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Standards remain well below average. Many make very good progress in developing their skills in reading and writing and number work. The school is aware that for a small number of pupils progress in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory rather than good because there is not always sufficient focus on pupils' targets linked to literacy and numeracy. As a result a few pupils make slower progress in some aspects of their work. For example, for some their progress in using and applying mathematics is not as strong as their progress in understanding number work. In the key area of communication most pupils make consistently good progress and improve their skills in the use of sign and symbol and communication aids, for example pupils using different switches appropriately, to turn on music and to start disco lights. As a result of improved teaching and curriculum planning pupils now make good progress in science, an area of concern at the time of the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social skills because considerable importance is placed on this aspect of their learning. They develop into confident young adults who are interested in their environment and are able to put forward their views and ideas. They know they are listened to by staff and older pupils, for example, in having their suggestions about recording their achievements adopted by staff.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Although a small number of pupils have challenging behaviours they are learning to manage these and pupils say they feel safe in school. They know that they can talk to staff if they have a problem and like the fact that they have lots of friends in school. There is a real sense of community. Pupils work well together in and out of lessons. At lunchtimes pupils chat to each other and staff, and in whole-school events such as assembly they listen well and try hard to concentrate the whole time. There is great enthusiasm for keeping fit and pupils are proud of their achievements for example in swimming. They like the out-of-school activities. One parent, typical of many, wrote about her child's enthusiasm for these activities and the fact that her daughter 'never wants to leave until last'. Pupils really enjoy their learning, including opportunities for cooking meals and preparing food for others. They show a good understanding of what they should and should not eat and take full advantage of the good choices at lunchtimes.

Pupils develop very good social skills that enable them to go out into the community and behave well. Such skills also equip them well for life when they leave school. They know how to behave in a range of settings and are always polite and friendly. They have a good awareness of different religions and of different cultures. The school is planning to enhance their understanding further by developing links with schools in other countries including some in Africa.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are a number of strengths in teaching that support pupils' learning well. Staff have a very good understanding of the range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities in each class. This together with the strong teamwork between teachers and support staff that exists in each class, ensures that most pupils make good progress. In some of the teaching, however, individual literacy and numeracy targets are not consistently well used to inform planning. Consequently activities in some lessons are not consistently well matched to pupils' learning needs and progress in literacy and numeracy for a few pupils is slower. There is a good range of activities in most lessons and staff ensure that lessons are practical and interesting. For example, a numeracy lesson on subtraction was held in the gym and pupils had to count the number of skittles they had knocked down with the ball, working out how many were left. Occasionally the pace of lessons slows but more often than not staff are quick to ensure all pupils are involved in their learning. Support staff play a very active role in lessons and their confidence to take the initiative is a credit to them. Teachers ensure support staff have a good understanding of the work during each day so that they are able to take the lead in particular activities, following teachers' planning very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and ensures that pupils have a good range of experiences both on and off the school site which support their skills development well. It is particularly well focused on developing pupils' personal skills and planning for these through visits out of school is very good. There are good opportunities for most pupils to experience mainstream and college settings. Planning for the move to the new site includes ensuring close links with the other schools located there. The provision for multisensory work, including the use of symbols and signs, is good. There are good quality enrichment activities including a holiday play scheme that is much valued by parents because it provides pupils with new experiences. The school acknowledges that the range and variety of enrichment activities could be wider and it is planning to extend these.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and welfare of pupils is, appropriately, given a high priority. Pupils are treated with respect and their health and medical needs dealt with well so that their dignity is preserved. There are good systems to ensure that they are kept safe and child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust. The management of the more challenging behaviours of older pupils was a cause for concern at the time of the last inspection. This has been addressed well. Pupils' individual behaviour programmes are excellent and support both staff and pupils in managing behaviour very well.

Many parents comment on the good level of communication they have with staff. Parents consider they are well informed about how well their children are doing and the work that their children do each day. This is the same for the pupils themselves. The weekly review sessions enable pupils to have a good understanding of how well they are doing in their personal targets. There are examples of very good practice in the way this is being done in some classes and this is beginning to be shared amongst all staff. All classes display pupils' personal and social targets and in some there is an ongoing record completed by pupils or by staff to show the progress being made. There is an improving focus on pupils' academic targets and whilst these are not given the same level of prominence, staff are effective at checking that pupils are making the progress they should in these.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Many staff and governors comment on the success of the acting headteacher in bringing staff together. Staff have been through a very difficult time, with senior staff illness and this together with the move to a new site was affecting staff morale. The acting headteacher has brought staff together very effectively and there is now a very strong staff team. Senior staff feel they are involved well in decision making and they all carry out their roles and responsibilities well.

The acting headteacher has established a very rigorous timetable for monitoring aspects of the school's provision and this has led to a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. This is reflected in senior leaders' accurate self- evaluation of the school. The good bank of evidence that has now been collated has enhanced planning because it provides

them with an even clearer view of the school's strengths and areas in need of development related to pupil progress. The governing body is well led and there are good systems in place to ensure they have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. However, the school acknowledges that further refinement in planning is needed, as the targets for success of developments are not always sufficiently well focused or measurable to enable staff and governors to gain a full picture of how well they have been achieved. Planning for the move to a new site includes enhancing the school's role further in the local community and beyond. The range of activities within the local community that it is now involved in is good and these are having a positive impact on both staff and pupils. Senior managers have clear strategies for sustaining and developing these links after moving to the new site.

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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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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**

14 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Fosseway School, Bristol, BS14 9LN.

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school. We agree with you and your parents and carers that your school is a good school. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school and how nearly all of you attend school every day. You all seem very sensible and have a good understanding of how to stay safe. You are rightly very proud of how good you are at swimming and staying fit. We enjoyed seeing you at lunchtime and how you choose to eat healthily. There are good systems to make sure you stay safe and you say you know who to talk to if you have concerns.

You do very well in achieving your personal and social targets and your behaviour is extremely good. Teaching is good and the staff work very well together. Because of this you all make good progress and achieve well. We have though, asked teachers to make sure that the targets you have in literacy and numeracy are better used so that the work you do in lessons is always matched to your ability. We feel that you have lots to do during the day and can see why you are so happy at school.

The school works hard to give you many opportunities to learn and links with other schools are good. The move to a new school is very exciting and the staff have good ideas about how you will be able to be involved with the other schools on the site. The good links with other people and your parents and carers support you very well to ensure you are well looked after.

The acting headteacher has made some good changes in the school and there is a good strong team running the school. We have asked senior leaders to make sure that the targets they set for making the school better are easier to measure. That way they and governors can always be sure they have achieved what they set out to do.

We wish you all well for the future and hope you continue to contribute to the community in the way that you do now.

With very best wishes

Yours faithfully

Sarah Mascal

Lead inspector