

# Fosse Way School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109405
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	324954
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jeffery Plumb

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.

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<b>Boarding provision</b>	
<b>Social care URN</b>	
<b>Social care inspector</b>	Wilfred Maxfield

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Foundation special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	145
Sixth form	17
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marian Bodman
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Gregory

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<b>Age group</b>	3–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324954

<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Longfellow Road Radstock Bath BA3 3AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01761 412198
<b>Fax number</b>	01761 411751

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors and two Social Care Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school provides for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, complex learning difficulties, physical disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Almost all are from White British backgrounds. It has a satellite class for pupils with ASD (on roll at this school) on a nearby secondary phase school site. The school provides regional specialist provision for the local authority for pupils with ASD and their parents and carers and arranges national conferences for other schools who teach pupils with ASD. It has Technology Specialist Status and in September 2008, the Fosse Way School Trust was established. The sixth form provision has grown significantly since the last inspection. There is five-days-a-week residential provision for 12 pupils. The school is currently undergoing a significant building programme. The school has a number of national awards, including the Activemark and Sportsmark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school at the cutting edge of pioneering initiatives to remove barriers to learning and development for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The headteacher's vision and aspiration that pupils will 'reach for the sky' and become skilled and successful adults is shared by governors, all partners within the trust and a dedicated staff team. The satellite class for pupils with autism on a nearby secondary school site enables pupils with autism to grow in confidence and independence and achieve outstanding academic success. Funding and planning is in place to launch a classroom in a local hospital with a jobs coach to provide internships for sixth form students. This model is planned to enable them to gain experience and access good jobs based on merit. High expectations based on dignity lies at the heart of this successful school. The vast majority of parents are delighted with what this school achieves for their children.

Achievement is outstanding, as is the quality of teaching and learning. The accommodation and resources are designed to remove barriers to learning. For example, the outstanding new accommodation for design and technology and for science has enabled all pupils to be fully included in all activities and so raised their achievement in these subjects. As pupils are enabled to communicate independent choices they become confident and their self-esteem is raised. An exciting, relevant and sensory curriculum enables the vast majority to reach their full potential. Vocational and academic accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 are outstanding and equip pupils exceptionally well for starting out on relevant college pathways to support them in finding employment. Every effort possible is made to enable pupils to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles. By the end of Key Stage 5, many students have the skills to travel safely and independently by bus, get on the right bus and pay their fare. Their independence, confidence, acquisition of life skills and literacy skills gives them a secure footing as they begin to find their way in the world as responsible young adults who are determined to succeed.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as is their quality of care, guidance and support. Performance data is used very effectively and frequently to realign challenging targets to raise pupils' academic achievement and social development. Flexibility in planning lies at the heart of the successful leadership and management of this school. Self-evaluation results in carefully planned changes which benefit the pupils. For example, last academic year, analysis of performance data recognised that achievement in Key Stage 2 was slower than in the other key stages. The Key Stage 2 team went back to the drawing board and re-designed the curriculum, which has already had a significant impact on raising achievement in this key stage. Improvement since the last inspection is outstanding, as is the capacity for further improvement.

### Effectiveness of the sixth form

#### Grade: 2

The sixth form provision is good. It is at an earlier stage of development than other aspects of the school's work and some recent curriculum developments are at too early a stage of development to evaluate their full impact. Two new sixth form co-ordinators came into post at the beginning of the current academic year and their roles and responsibilities are shaping up well. They are effectively line managed by an assistant headteacher. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Achievement is good. Ten students follow an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Towards Independence course and

develop functional literacy and numeracy skills well. They also follow a programme to develop independence in the home. The school buys into a training home to give these students experience of staying over on a Friday night. This gives students good opportunities to develop essential life skills such as shopping, preparing and cooking a meal. The school does not own its own flat and this limits the range of life skills experience that can be offered. The second group, of higher achievers, take a one- year entry level course and their financial capability is accredited through them gaining the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE). They also acquire a food hygiene qualification, a first aid qualification and follow an adult literacy and numeracy course. The very high quality teaching is not yet fully effective in its impact, reflecting the fact that the curriculum packages are so new and that accommodation constraints limit opportunities to fully develop some independent living skills. Also, the school is new as a trust and work is in progress to bring all parents and partners on board in respect of the trust's aim to develop clear pathways for students into further education, training and employment when they leave school.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Achievement for children under five is outstanding because teaching is very effectively planned to meet the needs of each child. On entry, very few children are able to sit still and they cannot perform tasks independently. Often they are anxious and have little communication. Provision is very well planned, with outstanding leadership and management ensuring that it quickly has a beneficial impact. Through the use of pictures and access to large switches, the majority begin to communicate choices and their frustration subsides. Higher achievers develop their letter sounds well. Through opportunities to initiate play their social skills develop well. As they learn to take turns and share toys with each other the obsessions and fixations on a particular object that the children have become less and less. Teaching is outstanding. Teachers use any obsessions children have in a positive way to develop their language and mathematical skills, such as a fixation on shoe horns, which is used very effectively to support children in posting shapes into a box. Teachers work ceaselessly to ensure that children are given frequent opportunities to develop their language, mathematical and physical skills both indoors and in the outdoor play area. Social development is outstanding and parents are delighted with what their children achieve, because they are able to take them out, for example to a café, without them having a tantrum and they blend in unnoticed with other children. High achievers gain rapid independence, for example in signing (using Makaton) their need to use the toilet. Teachers and teaching assistants observe children's developments and record them meticulously on post-it notes which feed into their profile on each child's progress. This in turn is used very effectively to plan their next steps in learning. Partnership with parents is outstanding and the Early Bird Course for parents of children with autism about to enter the Early Years Foundation Stage within the school is greatly appreciated.

## **Effectiveness of boarding provision**

### **Grade: 2**

Students living at the school benefit from a highly professional and caring approach to their physical, emotional and mental health needs. The school has excellent assessment tools which identify the health needs of children and young people. Regular interdisciplinary reviews ensure that psychological and intimate care issues are known and staff are enabled to implement the school's preferred strategies. External medical advice is available to support children with

specific medical conditions. Excellent systems support safe healthcare, including the storage and administration of medication, and the recording of significant medical events. Students enjoy a healthy diet. However, the recording of menus as served contains significant gaps.

Staff respect and protect the children's individual rights and their need for privacy. They are equally sensitive to specific conditions and personal restrictions and follow strict guidelines regarding privacy, confidentiality and safeguarding. The school's approach to processing complaints is always transparent and enables everyone to make representations in the best interest of children and young people. Safeguarding policies and procedures are overseen by the deputy headteacher, who is also responsible for delivering training and updating the school's staff teams on the latest safeguarding policies. The deputy headteacher is supported by a senior management team. Procedures designed to protect young people absent without authority and anti-bullying strategies are monitored well. The school has strong links with the local authority safeguarding board and training departments. As a result, children and young people are protected by a staff group well trained and informed in the school's strict safeguarding policies. However, not all staff know how to access external safeguarding advice should they suspect the failure of internal systems.

Residential staff implement the school's policies on discipline and the management of challenging behaviours. Detailed behaviour management plans are in place. Students displaying challenging behaviour are supported by the expert implementation of a specific system of de-escalation. Physical interventions are used as a last resort and are always tailored to the needs of the student.

Students enjoy safe and well maintained residential accommodation. Equipment specific to their needs is robustly risk assessed, as is the use of the school's swimming pool and other areas used by boarders.

In the past, the school has allowed newly recruited staff to start employment without having received all of the necessary safeguarding checks. Prospective staff were strictly supervised and checks were normally completed in a matter of days. However, in recent months, all decision makers have received additional training in safer recruitment and all related policies have been reviewed. Since the review, no new members of staff have been permitted to work with the students without prior completion of all checks.

Residential students enjoy a meaningful stay with good recreational opportunities. Activities are designed to support the general curriculum. A wide range of internal and external support is available for every resident to achieve their potential. The rights of children and young people are further promoted through access to an advocacy service. The vast majority of parents report excellent contact with the school is attained. Parents and carers are always informed about key decisions. Children are encouraged to use varying means of communication, often with great success. The school is expert at promoting and supporting individual choice. This also manifests through supporting a particular choice of clothing or through personalising a bedroom. Living quarters reflect the staff group's attention to detail and care for the environment. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Students' achievement of independence is paramount. Residents benefit from the school's excellent programmes for promoting the transition into community living and vocational opportunities. The school clearly follows an inspired vision and clear direction which is well described in the statement of purpose and supported by its policies and procedures. The board of governors regularly monitors the performance of the residential provisions against the school principles and ethos. The residential boarding provision is always well staffed. Residential students benefit from an experienced core staff team which

is well trained, supervised and supported. All of the residential procedures, records and other systems are well monitored. A very competent and well qualified residential manager enjoys the support of the deputy headteacher and other colleagues in this very effectively run school.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the sixth form accommodation to increase the range of learning opportunities for developing independent living skills.
- Work with parents and partners to identify clear pathways for students into further education colleges, training and employment when they leave school. National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care
- Ensure that menus are recorded as served (NMS 15).
- Ensure the continued implementation of the newly revised safer recruitment policies. Policies need to include robust wording that all Criminal Records Bureau and List 99 checks must have been completed (NMS 27.7.).
- Provide a sanction log as prescribed in the standards (NMS 10.9.).

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Achievement is outstanding. All groups achieve equally well. Pupils make rapid gains in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and art. However, standards are well below the national average for the vast majority of pupils, reflecting the complexity of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. With good signing support and access to using pictures, pupils quickly learn to communicate choices independently. Assisted by computer programs, they begin to write using symbols. Using large picture books, they begin to make rapid gains in reading. By Key Stage 4, the vast majority of pupils have the literacy skills required to follow nationally accredited courses. GCSE results and BTEC qualifications gained in 2008 demonstrated pupils' excellent progress, when measured against their starting points in Key Stage 4. Successes for pupils include an A grade pass in GCSE art and going on to join the sixth form of a local mainstream secondary school. Specialist technology status with its accompanying high quality resources and accommodation has had a positive impact on raising achievement in all subjects. Five students achieved GCSE passes across the school's three specialist subjects of mathematics, science and design and technology.

Gains in important life skills and independence are outstanding, for example reading bus timetables, budgeting and planning healthy meals. Data analysis informs planning to raise achievement. The school identified that progress in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 11 in 2008 was slower than in other subjects. This year, as a result, the opportunity to take the European Computer Driving Licence has been trialled in ICT and standards have risen. This has resulted in the school receiving the Information and Community Technology award.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are overwhelmingly positive in their attitude to learning. This is reflected in their outstanding behaviour, including their behaviour towards each other, and in their attendance. The very few absences are due to long-term treatments in hospital. The pupils express themselves very confidently through a vibrant school council and effect changes which benefit their educational provision. Pupils with very complex needs participate



in the school council through peer advocacy support. The school successfully meets pupils' physical and emotional health needs and the pupils how to manage their feelings of anger appropriately. Pupils assume responsibility for healthy eating and taking regular exercise, the success of which has resulted in achieving the Healthy Schools award. Pupils are taught how to travel on a bus safely and are made aware of the dangers of talking to strangers. They learn how to open a bank account and develop budget management skills. They make a very positive contribution in the wider community. For example, a group of high achieving pupils have supported an ICT skills course for over-50s who live near to the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, including their awareness of cultural diversity, is outstanding. They make outstanding gains in developing confidence and self-esteem and skills in relating to others. These, together with their excellent academic progress, means they are very well prepared for future education, training and employment.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching sparkles because enthusiastic teachers latch on successfully to pupils' interests and use them in planning, to motivate their learning and raise their achievement. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, the teacher used a pupil's fascination with a particular pop artist's music albums to improve his addition skills. Very effective use is made of questioning, using, as appropriate, signing, and this challenges pupils' thinking and accelerates their learning. Very well planned problem-solving and hands-on activities are given to groups, carefully based on each individual's required next steps of learning. As a result, team-working skills develop very well but at the same time pupils are enabled to find solutions to tasks independently. Excellent relationships enable pupils to feel safe to try new methods and discover new techniques, for example in design and technology. Outstanding use is made of information and communication technology to significantly benefit pupils' learning across all subjects. Excellent use of assessment about what each pupil knows and can do feeds planned learning outcomes lesson by lesson and so pupils make outstanding progress in the areas needed to raise their achievement. 'Reaching for the sky', the school's leadership ensures that all physical barriers to learning for pupils are eradicated by adapting all furniture and resources to ensure full inclusion. For example, non-ambulant pupils dance joyfully in their wheelchairs in this school and are enabled to participate fully in all of their lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

An innovative and creative curriculum accelerates pupils' learning and raises their achievement. The Key Stage 3 project-based curriculum is outstanding. It develops pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills exceptionally well. Tailor-made individual curriculum packages at Key Stage 4 enable pupils to very successfully gain a wide range of accredited vocational qualifications and GCSEs. High quality enterprise projects and relevant work experience placements make an outstanding contribution to the development of pupils' work-related skills. Modifications to furniture and adaptation of resources successfully remove barriers to learning for pupils and promote their independence. Many practical opportunities are given to pupils to shop, plan and prepare healthy meals. These develop pupils' money handling skills exceptionally well and develop their skills to live as independently as possible. The development of pupils' independent and safe travel skills is an outstanding feature. Provision for information

and communication technology and design and technology are outstanding. Excellent analysis of the curriculum leads to decisive actions for improvement, as evidenced in the recently developed theme-based Key Stage 2 curriculum. Inclusion opportunities are excellent, for example the piloted Key Stage 4 satellite class for pupils with autism on a nearby secondary school site. Enrichment through the use of visitors and residential experiences is outstanding.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Health professionals and dedicated education staff work in a very effective partnership to support pupils in overcoming barriers to learning. This accelerates their progress in communication and independent feeding and mobility. Parents are delighted with the way in which this partnership benefits their children. One said that the speech and language support her child received enabled him to speak for the first time and went on to describe this as 'the best gift I have ever been given'. Another praised the joined up working between education staff and the school's physiotherapist. She said, 'My child had poor mobility when he started school, but now he climbs up and down stairs at home independently and gets in and out of my car without support.' Induction and transition arrangements are outstanding and matched to the specific needs of each pupil. Child protection procedures meet government guidelines. Risk assessments, including pupils' behaviour, are thorough and detailed. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. The systems for tracking pupils' social and academic progress over time are outstanding. The school uses these systems very effectively to set pupils challenging targets to raise their achievement and awareness of gains made in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher provides an outstanding vision and direction which focuses on raising the aspirations for pupils and their families. This commitment is reflected well in their Investors in People award. As a consequence, all adults associated with the school refuse to allow learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be a barrier to pupils becoming successful and independent young adults. Evaluation of pioneering developments is thorough and used to develop and expand them further. For example, the evaluation of the satellite provision for ASD pupils is to be extended through developing similar provision in other mainstream schools within the local authority. Strategic thinking about provision for pre-school children with disabilities through to adulthood post-25 years of age is imaginative and it informs decisive action plans to enhance their quality of education and life opportunities. Priorities on the improvement plan focus on achievement outcomes for pupils. Community cohesion focuses on changing a mindset locally, nationally and internationally about disability so that it is not viewed as a disability but an opportunity for success. In a nearby mainstream school, the attitude of pupils within that school towards disability has been radically changed because of the inclusion of pupils with ASD on their campus. The senior leadership team and middle managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Through delegation and distributed leadership responsibilities, they drive forward and evaluate initiatives which significantly benefit the pupils. Governance is very effective and supports and challenges both the headteacher and the local authority as advocates for the best possible provision for the pupils.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	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 effectiveness of boarding provision	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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**

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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	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	1	
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

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
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	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	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**

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fosse Way School, Radstock, Bath BA3 3AL

Inspectors greatly enjoyed visiting your school and talking with so many of you. The enthusiasm you have for your work and the interesting projects you engage in, particularly in design and technology and science, are outstanding.

We think that your school is outstanding. Your achievements in the development of life skills and independence are excellent. The teaching you receive sparkles and you are challenged to reach your full potential. Your accommodation is for the most part excellent. Your care and support are outstanding. Your curriculum is relevant and prepares you exceptionally well for further college courses and the world of work. Your headteacher and other dedicated staff lead and manage your school exceptionally well.

We have asked your headteacher to further improve the accommodation in the sixth form so that sixth formers can learn even more about independent living. We have also asked him to work within the community to support you even better when you leave school and college and settle as responsible adults in the community.

You are right to be proud of your school. Thank you for all of your hard work. We are delighted that you love your school, behave so well and attend regularly. We ask you to continue to support your headteacher, staff and governors to make your school even better than it is already.

Yours faithfully

Jeffery Plumb

Lead inspector