

# Slated Row School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110587
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	325173
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Goodchild

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>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	168
Sixth form	42
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>	Mrs Vanessa Miles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Liz Bull
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 September 2005
<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>	Old Wolverton Road Wolverton Milton Keynes MK12 5NJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 316017
<b>Fax number</b>	01908 315082

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<b>Age group</b>	4–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This maintained day special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is larger than average. Nearly all pupils have some additional needs and the school has seen an increase since the last inspection in the number of pupils with complex learning difficulties. A third of learners are eligible for free school meals and a small number of learners are in local authority care.

Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of the pupils of minority ethnic heritage also speak English as an additional language. There are currently four children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is very low because of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has Healthy Schools, Artsmark (silver), Sportsmark, Activemark and ICT awards and Investor in People status.

## 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 that has sustained and built on the many strengths found at the last inspection. The school is currently oversubscribed and very popular with parents. Many parents wrote to say that they are delighted with its work, for example, describing the school as 'truly fantastic' and 'an amazing place'. They say that the staff are 'warm, friendly and approachable' and have created 'a lovely place to grow and learn, a perfect environment to nourish and support every pupil'.

Achievement is outstanding though standards remain very low because of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's success in accredited courses has improved year by year despite an increase in the number of pupils with complex needs. This is because pupils make outstanding progress in response to excellent teaching and a curriculum matched exceptionally well to their interests and needs. Outstanding achievement is also due to the fact that teachers set highly challenging targets in order to get the most out of every pupil and the school has exemplary systems for gathering and analysing information to track pupils' progress. Teachers use assessment information exceptionally well to match work to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils and to evaluate the school's effectiveness.

Outstanding care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' exceptional personal development. Pupils are very friendly, confident and respectful, and they respond with enthusiasm to the wide range of activities the school has to offer. Parents say that their children look forward to going to school each day and come home very happy. Pupils readily take responsibility and gain enormously in their independence to become mature and sensible young people by the time they move on to college, training or employment.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is passionate about making the school as good as it can possibly be and provides excellent leadership and direction to its work. She has very high expectations of staff and pupils and insists on the highest possible quality in all aspects of the school's work. She is supported exceptionally well by other staff in key management roles and there is a very strong commitment to continuous improvement at all levels. Monitoring is very rigorous, self-evaluation is extremely accurate and development planning most thorough. The school has made outstanding improvement since the last inspection and it is exceptionally well placed to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 1

Students' achievement and progress in the sixth form are outstanding. Provision has been developed significantly since the last inspection in response to an increase in the number of students, and an additional classroom has been added. Life at post-16 has an exciting start with a one-week residential visit attended by all sixth formers. This enables friendships to be developed, teams to be built and experiences to be shared. It is also the opportunity for the older students to help the younger ones. The range of accreditation open to students has increased and all students benefit from college placements tailored exceptionally well to their individual needs. Their success with work experience often results in students being offered permanent jobs. Teaching is outstanding and each student has an individualised learning programme. Relationships in the sixth form are exceptionally good and staff provide outstanding

personal and academic support and guidance to students. Leadership and management in the sixth form are outstanding.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The school makes outstanding provision for children in the EYFS. Teaching is outstanding and children make exceptionally good progress. Children benefit a great deal from the high level of adult support and do particularly well in communication, language and literacy, problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy and in personal, social and emotional development. In some areas, for example, in their knowledge of numbers, children are working broadly in line with national expectations for their age. The EYFS is led and managed extremely well and learning opportunities are matched very closely to children's individual needs.

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

The inspection identified no key issues that are not already high on the school's own agenda.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Many parents say that they are very pleased with their children's progress, which is often 'more than we ever thought possible'. The school has a wealth of data showing that pupils' achievement is exemplary and all groups of pupils do equally well. Examination results have improved year by year since the last inspection and nearly all pupils meet and frequently exceed their challenging targets. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils gained up to seven Entry Level Certificates in 2008 and nine pupils gained up to three GCSEs at C to G grades. Students in the sixth form also meet with a high level of success in a range of courses matched very well to their individual needs and their results have also shown consistent improvement. An increase in the number of qualifications offered is now providing even further opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation. Pupils excel in art, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education (PE). Artwork of a very high standard is displayed throughout the school and pupils have met with a great deal of success in local and regional competitive sporting events.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are friendly and polite, relationships are excellent throughout the school and behaviour is outstanding. Pupils work very well together and are eager to learn. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils make rapid gains in their self-esteem and the school is a harmonious community because pupils develop a very good understanding of other people's feelings. Pupils confirm that they feel safe at school and are very clear about how to stay healthy. They understand how to eat healthily and readily take plenty of exercise. Pupils very much enjoy school and enthusiastically join in the many activities provided for them. The attendance rate has improved since the last inspection and it is now outstanding. Pupils make an exceptionally good contribution to the school community and show maturity in the way they take responsibility. They raise significant amounts of money for charity, organising events such as coffee mornings themselves, and older students frequently look after the younger ones. The outstanding progress pupils make in gaining basic skills and the wealth of personal qualities they develop prepare them exceptionally well for the future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

The fact that five staff were nominated for Teacher Awards in 2008 reflects the very high proportion of teaching that is outstanding. Staff have a very thorough knowledge of the needs and interests of individual pupils and plan lessons very carefully to ensure that work matches the next steps in their learning. Teachers are highly skilled in making learning exciting yet maintaining a calm atmosphere for learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding, and teachers support and challenge pupils in equal measure. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic, interested learners who readily contribute ideas and suggestions. By providing stimulating lessons that proceed at just the right pace, teachers ensure that pupils behave exceptionally well. Lively sessions at the end of lessons summarise and consolidate what pupils have learnt. ICT is used very effectively to stimulate learning, and practical resources are used imaginatively to promote pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and work seamlessly with teachers in most lessons. Assessment is extremely thorough so teachers know exactly how well pupils are doing and where to target additional help.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum is matched exceptionally well to pupils' individual needs, and the strong focus on literacy and numeracy ensures that pupils all have the opportunity to gain qualifications that employers will recognise. Personal, social, health and citizenship education ensures that all pupils have a thorough understanding of issues they need to be aware of for later life. Breakfast club and after school clubs, including the very popular youth club, provide a highly effective extended day for many pupils. Residential visits, including European cultural and skiing trips, make an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development and achievement. Involvement in the School Sports Partnership and the school's own outstanding provision enable pupils to develop their skills in a wide range of sports. The school's specialist facilities, productive business links and strong partnerships with other schools and colleges ensure pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities. Extensive work experience and independence programmes prepare pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their lives.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school cares for its pupils exceptionally well and all pupils are treated equally. Staff are committed to doing their best for the pupils and provide outstanding support and guidance throughout the day. They know the pupils very well and are quick to respond when someone needs help. For instance, a teaching assistant discreetly prepared a hot water bottle during the inspection for a pupil who was feeling the cold. Very close partnerships with other schools ensure that new pupils settle quickly. High-quality careers guidance and close links with colleges prepare pupils very well for the next stage of their lives. Rigorous procedures ensure that the school protects its pupils and all activities are assessed against possible risks. Outstanding links with other agencies ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils, including looked after children, are fully met. Target-setting and the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress are exemplary. Through marking, verbal guidance and awards, pupils are well informed about how well they

are doing and how to improve their work. Procedures to promote regular attendance and expected levels of behaviour are outstanding. Rigorous and systematic monitoring has led to a significant improvement in attendance since the last inspection.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher has a very clear strategic vision for the school and plays a vital part in maintaining the pace of development. She communicates her very high expectations to other staff so that they are clear about how to succeed and they in turn convey a similar message to pupils. As a result, the staff are very committed to doing all they can to make the school as good as possible for the pupils and they work as a united team with a shared sense of purpose. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher are highly experienced managers who are very efficient in weaving the head's vision into day-to-day practice. Teachers and teaching assistants have very good opportunities to develop their skills through training and, since the last inspection, leadership has become stronger through developing the role of subject leaders. They now play an integral role in the school's outstanding self-evaluation and development planning. Much careful thought has gone into adapting and extending the accommodation to provide better facilities, especially for the increasing number of pupils with complex needs. This has helped to ensure that all pupils are fully included and that pupils learn in an attractive and stimulating environment. The school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well not only through involvement in the local community but also through the celebration of different pupils' cultures, foreign trips and links with schools abroad, and activities such as the recent work with Creative Partnerships. Governors provide very good support and challenge to the school and are well informed about the school's effectiveness. A number of governors regularly visit the school to gather information for themselves and governors ask challenging questions about how well pupils are doing. Furthermore, a particularly strong feature of governance is the way staff and governors work together to drive the school forward.

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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	1
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	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	1
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	1
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	1
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	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	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**

16 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Slated Row School, Milton Keynes, MK12 5NJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We were interested to see all the exciting things you do and now I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school.

Slated Row School is outstanding because the headteacher and other teachers and teaching assistants do all they can to make it as good as possible for you. Many of your parents wrote to say how pleased they are with the school and you told us how much you enjoy it. There are many good things about your school so these are just some of the things we liked best about it.

- The school helps you to make outstanding progress with your work and older pupils gain several qualifications by the time they leave.
- The teachers know exactly how well you are doing and they match work exactly to the next steps in your learning.
- You have fantastic opportunities to take part in clubs at lunchtime and after school and to go on residential trips.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on extremely well.
- You are very good at taking responsibility and are always ready to help others.
- The teachers and teaching assistants take really good care of you; they push you to do your best but also provide you just the right amount of support.

As the school is led and managed extremely well, we did not find anything new that the school should do to improve. We have just asked the headteacher to carry on with all the things she is already planning to make the school even better.

Enjoy the rest of your time at Slated Row and we wish you luck in the future.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Goodchild

Lead Inspector