

David Lewis School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111499
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	325392
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

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

Boarding provision
Social care URN
Social care inspector

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	7-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	50
Sixth form	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Isobel Hind
Headteacher	Mr C Dean
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2006
School address	Mill Lane Warford Alderley Edge Cheshire SK9 7UD
Telephone number	01565 640 066
Fax number	01565 640 166

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector and three Social Care Inspectors. Full details of the inspection on the quality of boarding are given in a separate social care report available from Ofsted.

Description of the school

The school caters for pupils with serious neurological conditions, usually including difficult-to-treat epilepsy. Many pupils have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities including autism, specific, severe and profound. Many display challenging behaviour. All pupils have significant communication difficulties and many suffer from medical conditions. Pupils come from throughout the United Kingdom. All have statements of special educational need and the great majority is of White British heritage. The vast majority of pupils are resident, most of them all year round. A very high proportion of pupils are looked after children. The school has the National Healthy Schools Award, an Inclusion Quality Mark and the Investors in Careers Award.

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 with some outstanding aspects. It provides good value for money. Representative views from parents include, 'Our daughter is thriving: she enjoys the education and care and leads an inclusive lifestyle with trips into the community.' Though attainment on entry to the school is very low, achievement is good. Progress is good across the school because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers develop strong relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour extremely well. Stimulating presentation of work in lessons captures pupils' interest and so they enjoy working hard. However, although teachers plan well what they expect classes to learn generally, a few teachers do not plan and record as well as they might what individuals are expected to learn in each lesson. This reduces slightly the effectiveness of pupils' learning and progress.

Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils come to terms with their difficulties and develop very high levels of self-esteem and confidence. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies to ensure pupils' well-being. The availability of much specialist therapeutic and medical care on site is a huge asset for pupils. The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy especially the chances to learn in small steps through practical experiences. Chances to develop basic skills in literacy and numeracy are good. However, there are not enough chances across the curriculum for pupils to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills fully. This has limited progress in this area to satisfactory.

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils show a very good awareness and consideration for others: for example, they take turns using learning resources. Behaviour in school is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school life to the full and this is reflected in good levels of attendance. Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards healthy living. For example, they participate very enthusiastically in hydrotherapy, swimming and other physical activities. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe: such as pupils in a cookery lesson who used equipment safely and sensibly as they made sweets. Pupils' contribution to the community is good. The school council has made several positive suggestions leading to school improvement. In view of pupils' and students' good achievement and outstanding personal development, their preparedness for the future is exceptional.

Leadership and management are good. The impact is seen in the good progress made by pupils and their outstanding personal development and well-being. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. This has resulted in a sense of common purpose across the school where inclusion lies at the heart of the school's work. Governors make a good contribution to school: for example, they are actively involved in projects within the Young Enterprise Initiative. Improvements in several key areas, most notably in care, guidance and support and personal development demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Students achieve well because teaching and learning are good and students' personal development is outstanding. Students mature and blossom into considerate and thoughtful young citizens. They become more independent as a result of the individual support they receive. All students successfully follow a course to develop essential life skills, each benefiting from a personalized learning programme. This leads to students

gaining a good number of accreditations. Students are given opportunities to experience the world of work either on site or in the community. They also attend a local college as well as benefiting from the close links with the David Lewis College which shares the site.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The overall judgement is good. All of the outcomes for children and young people are good apart from enjoying and achieving which is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged so that they are able to progress as quickly as they can.
- Create more opportunities across the curriculum to improve progress in ICT.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils make good progress, including during many off site activities regardless of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Communication and language development is always a very strong focus in learning and so pupils make exceptional progress in this area. The spoken word is accompanied by signing or the use of symbols, pictures and aids that enable pupils to understand and be understood. The majority of pupils make good progress in their reading, writing, numeracy and science. Progress in developing ICT skills is satisfactory. Many older pupils gain a wide range of accreditation by the time they leave school. Accreditation includes basic life skills: 'knowing how', 'moving forward' and 'taking the lead'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development makes an excellent contribution to learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. With time, pupils develop a very strong sense of self-awareness and confidence. They mature very well and develop very strong values about care, consideration and respect for others. In a discussion with the school council about the curriculum, it was clear that pupils are very thoughtful about each other and what they learn. They are inspired by the beauty of the world around them and said that, 'Animals as well as people should always be treated with kindness'. Pupils have a very good awareness of the diversity of cultures in society and appreciate the richness this brings to their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Strong features of teaching include the emphasis on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy, presentation that captures and sustains pupils' interest and good teamwork between adults in lessons to support learning. Teachers have a good awareness of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this ensures that lesson activities are well tailored to meet their needs. Consequently, pupils are engaged well in learning and achieve well. A typical example of teaching was seen in a 'bonfire maths' lesson where older pupils reinforced their number skills well as they cut and glued pictures into their workbooks. Pupils also learnt much

about fire safety, rounding off a good lesson. Individual learning plans are used well by teachers to ensure that pupils achieve their targets for the term. However, not all teachers plan and record what individual pupils are expected to learn in each lesson. This means they are not consistently challenged to progress quite as quickly as they could.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the wide range of learning activities, both in school and off site. Courses and activities are carefully tailored to their individual capabilities and interests. However, the school acknowledges that more chances are needed across the curriculum and in the residential setting for pupils to make better progress in developing ICT skills. The very strong emphasis on developing communication skills and for personal and social education is very effective. Pupils and students have good chances to learn about the world of work and gain work experiences. Pupils' capacity to stay healthy is promoted very well and the numerous opportunities to do this include yoga and horse riding. Good residential opportunities help pupils to develop their independence. Trips are plentiful and include shops, cinemas and museums. Visits also enable pupils to learn about the many beliefs, traditions and customs of others in our multicultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

School and residential staff are highly committed to encouraging achievement and ensuring that pupils have the best possible care and support. Procedures for safeguarding and ensuring the health and safety of pupils are clear and reviewed regularly. Outstanding links with a wide variety of therapists, neurologists and many specialist medical practitioners ensure that pupils are provided with very effective on site support. This is an outstanding strength at this school. Pastoral support and guidance is exceptional, leading to outstanding personal development. In this safe and supportive environment pupils, including looked after children, reach challenging targets. The school works extremely well with parents to ensure that pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the school is successfully focused on promoting personal development and raising achievement. These outcomes are monitored closely, and any problems are identified quickly and support put in place. Teaching is monitored rigorously. This ensures that pupils enjoy learning fully, achieve well and raise their awareness of health and safety matters. Preparation for the future is promoted at every opportunity. Managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Inspection findings match the school's self-evaluation. Resources are well used to support learning, especially communication aids in lessons. The school works with parents and outside agencies extremely effectively and its actions to promote community cohesion are good. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis with office staff making a strong contribution.

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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 effectiveness of boarding provision	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	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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	1	1
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	1	1

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?	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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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 making me so welcome when I inspected your school. I enjoyed meeting you and you were all very helpful.

This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out about the David Lewis School. You told me how happy you are at school. This is because the teachers and other adults make sure you are safe and provide lots of exciting things for you to do. You know what you need to do in order to be healthy and safe. Your behaviour is excellent and you are very good young citizens. I was impressed with the work of the school council and the way they help everyone. Well done.

You have good teachers and this is why you all learn a lot. The oldest pupils and students gain lots of certificates for their work. You progress well with your work.

The headteacher, staff and governors all work hard to make sure you all keep learning well. Your parents and carers think David Lewis is a good school with some super things about it and I agree with them.

To make the school even better the school must:

- make sure each of you has your own learning targets in each lesson
- give you more chances to use computers.