

Mayfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113641
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	325849
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Judi Bedawi

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
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	101
Sixth form	9
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	Sue Milner
Headteacher	June Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Moor Lane Watcombe Torquay TQ2 8NH
Telephone number	01803 328375
Fax number	01803 552014

Age group	2–19
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Inspection number	325849

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Mayfield school is designated for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). An increasing number have additional complex needs, including autistic syndrome disorders (ASD), medical conditions and challenging behaviours. Standards achieved by all pupils against national averages are exceptionally low and remain so because of their significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Nearly all pupils are White British. The school has gained many awards, including Healthy School, Activemark, primary and secondary Basic Skills and the Eco-School two flags award. The post-16 provision is known as the Further Education (FE) Unit. The school is preparing its bid for specialist school status in cognition and learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mayfield is a good school. It provides a wonderfully positive and calm learning environment so that pupils are delightfully happy and make good progress as they move up the school. They want to learn and the good curriculum is well matched to the diversity of the pupils' needs and holds their attention well, adding to their huge enjoyment. Attendance is good despite some absence mainly due to illness. The good, thoughtful leadership of the headteacher and the good support from her leadership team and her relatively new governing body enthuses staff. This has a strong impact on pupils' excellent personal development, including their confidence, self-esteem and relationships. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children's personal development, given their exceptionally low starting points, is good. Teaching is well focused on social skills but it takes time for this to have an impact on learning, so children's academic progress is satisfactory. It is accepted by the school that the EYFS provision requires further development.

Pupils mature very well, and are increasingly responsible and aware of others, tolerant, supportive and well focused on learning. There is strong spirituality in the way that FE students feel free to express their views. One, talking about his difficulties, used blunt language in relation to the impact they have on his life. Without exception, other students immediately offered positive comments, raising the student's self-esteem. Students are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives by an impressive transition programme.

Good teaching is directly linked to good progress by pupils, because staff know them extremely well. PMLD pupils mostly achieve well, supported by a good sensory curriculum. However, teachers are inconsistent in their expectations and the level of challenge they provide for SLD, ASD and higher attaining pupils who are ready and able to further develop their academic skills. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding as a result of the excellent behaviour management of staff and their assistants in resolving any behaviour 'blips'.

The school collects and analyses pupils' progress data effectively. It has recently adopted a new assessment and tracking system, not yet fully embedded, to more closely identify pupils' progress and link this to target setting. Guidance is good, especially in the setting of personal and behavioural targets. It does not yet extend as well as it could to academic skills and achievements.

Pastoral care, support and nurture, and the quality of relationships are excellent and highly valued by families. These factors are a major contribution to the pupils' excellent personal development. Partnerships with external agencies and other bodies are good and are strongly supportive of community cohesion.

Most aspects of the school's management are good. The school knows itself well and financial management is good, so it has good capacity to make further improvements.

Comments about the school from parents and carers are almost entirely positive. Typical comments are, 'It's like one big happy family', 'My child has a much happier life since starting at Mayfield' and 'School and teaching staff really care for the children.' Most parents feel, rightly, that their children are making good progress.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Although standards are well below the national average, students make good progress relative to their complex needs. A very few with talents in art and music make exceptional progress, achieving standards close to the national average. Students' personal development is outstanding. They are incredibly mature, with a realistic outlook on life. They are clearly aware of their personal limitations but determined to do their utmost to play a full part in their community as young adults. This is due to the good teaching, which offers excellent opportunities for students to express their views, with very supportive facilitation. Students are far less keen to do more formal work but can be persuaded, for example, through their enjoyment of the impressive transition careers and choices programme when they have to write application letters. Students are well prepared to move on and to gain newly introduced practical life-skills accreditation. Work experience allows them to broaden their own interests, enabling them to move on to day and residential colleges with confidence. Leadership and management of the FE unit are good, aimed at raising achievement and securing the best possible student outcomes. Students say the unit is 'Super Cool!'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children are settled, secure and happy because attention to their welfare and well-being is good. Supportive relationships with children and families build from initial home visits so that staff get to know the children very well. Communication 'passports' offer good information about individual likes and dislikes and guidance on therapeutic care, including physiotherapy. Attainment on entry is exceptionally low because of children's complex needs. Standards are well below those expected for similarly aged children. Their progress through EYFS and into Key Stage 1, by tiny steps, is satisfactory. It is appropriate that Year 1 pupils can stay in the EYFS until they are ready to move on. Teaching is satisfactory and often one-to-one so that children get used to regular routines and people. However, staff tend to intervene too soon rather than allowing children time and opportunity to try for themselves. This limits discovery and development of independence. Children have satisfactory sensory experiences such as enjoying smelling and holding whole fruits covered in paint to make prints on paper, but opportunities are missed to broaden the play and learning choices available. Children with SLD have a better choice of independent activities. One child was totally engrossed in decorating a 'magic dragon' in preparation for Chinese New Year and another was fascinated by the indoor sand tray, but some showed little interest in the activities provided. The school knows that outdoor learning needs development and that more could be done to enrich the indoor environment. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new EYFS leader is still getting to grips with the role and is open to new ideas to enhance planning and provision. Welfare requirements are met, safeguarding is extremely robust and all required areas of learning are covered.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop provision, planning and practice across the EYFS to give children better access to stimulating learning and play experiences with opportunities to explore for themselves.
- Focus on further raising learning outcomes through consistently high staff expectations and levels of challenge, particularly for SLD, ASD and higher attaining pupils.

- Fully embed and build on the new assessment system to inform future planning and target setting, so that pupils' progress is accelerated.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards remain low through the school and the FE unit, reflecting the depth of need. But from very low starting points, the majority of pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. There is a small minority with regressive and life-limiting conditions who do less well, but the school works hard to maintain their learning. Pupils answer questions well. A higher attaining Key Stage 2 pupil used the words 'cylinder' and 'sphere' when discussing shape. A few pupils and students make outstanding progress in relation to their prior attainment and capabilities. The school has effective intervention strategies to help those not achieving as well as expected. All FE unit students move on to day or residential colleges or to sheltered work placements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils love school, greeting staff with delighted smiles before rushing to meet their friends. Attendance is good, with absence mainly due to illness. All pupils do their best, relishing praise received from teachers and support staff for working hard. They particularly enjoy music, art and story-telling, eagerly supplying the next words of known stories with gusto. Pupils persevere very well with challenging subjects like writing and reading. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is impressive and so they eat sensibly. Many are competent swimmers, making good use of the school's hydro pool. Relationships and behaviour are excellent, so bullying is not an issue and pupils feel exceptionally safe. They say that if they are worried or having a difficult day there is always an adult to talk to. Pupils are extremely tolerant and supportive of each other and say they are treated equally. They gain significantly in independence and confidence as they mature. By the time they leave school they are well-rounded young adults, able to express their views very honestly. This is reflected in their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is enhanced by assemblies with success proudly shared, faith celebrations and joyous singing. The lively community links are excellent and there is an active school council and many lunchtime activities, with computer club a firm favourite. There is excellent involvement in the community, such as the Torbay Schools Festival, 'Junk Band' performances and fund raising for African schools. Considering ideas for more fund raising, a pupil used symbols to say 'help people with no houses'. FE students provide impressive role models for younger pupils, who enjoy learning 'real life skills' in the local community because they know it will help them in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There is outstanding teacher support from teaching assistants working flexibly to meet pupils' very diverse needs. Use of behaviour management strategies is also excellent and these aspects have real impact on pupils' learning and enjoyment. Relationships and respect between teachers and pupils are positive. Good teaching practice includes reminders of targets, a lively pace and high level of challenge that motivate and involve pupils. This is not yet secure in all teaching,

particularly in raising the bar for SLD, ASD and higher attaining pupils. Smarter use of time management is inconsistent so that in some lessons there is insufficient time to discuss work at lesson ends. Teachers are moving on well in developing confidence in assessment for learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well adapted to meet pupils' complex needs, including sensory and holistic provision. The use of music therapy is impressive in re-engaging troubled pupils in their learning. There is good use of different ways of communication, including electronic aids and symbols. Signing is used but is less evident. Art, physical education, music, personal, social and health education and information and communication technology are well organised and resourced. The school is aware that more emphasis on developing citizenship and basic skills will aid progress. Pupils enjoy hydrotherapy in the school pool. Good enrichment includes residential visits and visitors, with involvement in competitions, but extended day activities are limited by transport requirements. Nonetheless, there is a good choice of lunchtime activities. The outstanding transition, careers and choices programme runs from Year 7 into the FE unit so that pupils start thinking about their futures early. Pupils from Year 8 onwards and FE students enjoy taster days in local colleges and schools, which include experiences of vocational car mechanics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and attention to pupils' welfare and well-being, and that of their families and carers, has the highest priority and is exemplary. The staff know their pupils extremely well and can see when they need cherishing or cajoling. Parents are delighted by this support and the access to a wide range of expertise and advice, combined with the school's readiness to listen. Child protection and safeguarding procedures, including health and safety, are impressively robust. Guidance for personal development is good. There are targets for pupils in English and mathematics but because of the focus on personal development and practical learning, pupils are less sure of how well they are doing in acquiring basic skills. Staff are currently developing their skills in using the recently adopted assessment and tracking package, but this is not yet firmly in place. All pupils have a profile that they keep; they help to decide the content but this does mean that not all of them include samples of work to recall how well they achieved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher offers visible and accessible leadership well supported by her good senior leadership team, so that staff share the aims of raising outcomes and achievement no matter what the needs or background of each pupil. As a result, pupils' personal development and determination to overcome difficulties is excellent. Leadership and management at most other levels are good, including the FE Unit. In the EYFS, leadership and management are satisfactory. Middle leaders are supportive of their staff and monitor and evaluate subject performance effectively. Teamwork, including empowerment of teaching assistants, is a significant strength impacting positively on pupils' learning. Analysis and use of achievement data do not always lead to sufficiently challenging targets to drive up academic standards. The school development plan is a useful working document. It is monitored regularly by the good governing body, whose

members challenge and question the senior leadership team effectively. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity for the very diverse students, including its use of agencies, and this makes a strong contribution to community cohesion. An audit is in place with identified development areas. Self-evaluation, including the monitoring of teaching, is good, with the school having a clear picture of itself and its areas for improvement. Professional development is strong, helping to ensure that all pupils benefit from the school's provision. Financial management is astute, with money well spent in the right areas to secure ongoing improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
---	-----------------------	--------------

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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3	
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3	
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?	3	
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2	
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3	

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?	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	1	1
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	1	1
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	3	
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

21 November 2009

Dear Children, Pupils and Students

Inspection of Mayfield School, Torquay TQ2 8NH

We really enjoyed our visit to your friendly school. You told us a lot about your work and your friends when we talked to you. This helped us a lot, so thank you.

We think that you have a good headteacher and that the staff does a good job in teaching and caring for you, so you are very happy, love school and are doing well. Your behaviour and the way you look after each other are excellent – well done!

We have asked your school to do three things.

- We think that the youngest children should have more chances to find out more for themselves and have even more fun learning.
- We want your teachers to give you harder work when you are ready for it so that you get even better at doing your work without needing so much help.
- We want teachers to use what they know about your learning to help you know your learning targets as well as your personal targets so you can make wonderful progress. We know that you will help your teachers with this and will carry on working hard.

My very best wishes,

Judi Bedawi Lead inspector