

The Coppice School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119893
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327146
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	David Muir HMI

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 special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	66
Sixth form	13
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	Mr George Woods
Headteacher	Mrs Liz Davies
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ash Grove Bamber Bridge Preston Lancashire PR5 6GY
Telephone number	01772 336342

Age group	2–19
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Inspection number	327146

Fax number

01772 620826

Age group	2-19
Inspection dates	1-2 July 2009
Inspection number	327146

© 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Coppice School caters for pupils aged 2 to 19 years of age with severe and profound multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils have additional complex learning difficulties as well as medical and/or sensory needs. Some pupils also have Autistic Spectrum Disorder. All pupils have statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average. Most pupils are of White British origin. A small minority have English as an additional language. When pupils start school, they are working at the earliest levels of attainment in relation to personal and academic skills.

The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Coppice School is a good school with some outstanding aspects. Pupils' standards are exceptionally low due to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. During their time in the school they make good, and sometimes outstanding progress. The school has recently introduced new systems to monitor the progress of pupils more effectively, but this is in the early stages of development and therefore it is not yet consistent across the school. The inspection evidence shows that all groups of pupils achieve at the same level. The sixth form and the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding and pupils make excellent progress during their time in these departments. The school's limited accommodation impacts on the suitability of some teaching areas, but the school overcomes this by making good use of facilities in local schools and colleges.

The personal development and well-being of pupils in all key stages are outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is confirmed by the attendance figures. Although the attendance is slightly below average for all schools, this is due to the previously poor attendance of a few learners who had had previously negative experiences in other schools, or those who have low attendance due to their medical needs.

Pupils adopt extremely healthy lifestyles and feel very safe in school. This is reflected in the unanimously positive responses to the parental questionnaire, showing that parents believe that their children are well cared for and educated during their time in school. Pupils are increasingly able to manage their own behaviour. This, along with effective behaviour management by staff, means that behaviour is good. Overall, the school promotes social, moral, spiritual and cultural development outstandingly. Pupils are exposed to cultures and religions different to their own on a regular basis. Well planned transition arrangements from school into the pupils' next stage of life, along with well thought out work experience placements, good teaching in basic skills and information and communication technology (ICT), ensure that pupils develop workplace skills outstandingly well.

Teaching and learning are generally good throughout the school, although the school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not yet consistent enough. Overall the curriculum is good, although it is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage and sixth form. The school works effectively with a wide range of support agencies so that all pupils receive the support and guidance they require.

Leadership and management are good overall. Procedures are now being put in place so that the school can monitor the progress of groups of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning more effectively, although these are already in place in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the sixth form. The school meets all requirements for safeguarding. The school's role in promoting community cohesion is satisfactory as there is an action plan in place and its impact is being monitored by the management of the school. Governors provide satisfactory support to the school and have an increasing knowledge of its work, although they need to challenge the headteacher more effectively to gain a sharper understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding. Students make outstanding progress in lessons because consistently good, or better, teaching and highly effective support meets the needs of students extremely well. Students leave school with appropriate external accreditation having gained a range of AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) unit qualifications. The curriculum is outstanding overall, and work related learning and suitable work experiences for the pupils contribute to this by preparing students extremely well for life when they leave school. The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. There is a clear vision and purpose, and an accurate view about how it needs to develop and improve further. Students have good opportunities to link with, and gain experience of, the local community. They attend courses and taster days at local colleges, organise enterprise activities and participate well in the local community. The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements are outstanding and this information is used to plan for students' learning throughout their time in the sixth form.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Although children's standards are exceptionally low due to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, they make outstanding progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is due to the very effective teaching and support from all staff in the department. Before and during children's time in this department, parents are extremely well supported, so that transition into the school causes minimal disruption to the children. The Early Years Foundation Stage involves the families in all aspects of its work. Its exemplary 'homework bags' provide a wealth of stimulating ideas and activities, linked to the learning in school and the children's targets, to encourage families to become strong partners in their children's learning. The following is a typical comment from a parent of a child in this department: 'The school has a fantastic home/school relationship with parents. The Coppice should be proud of its atmosphere and ethos in the school'.

Children make excellent progress in their personal development. The curriculum is outstanding as it meets the needs of all the children to a very detailed level. This is also due to the staff's very well informed awareness and knowledge of children's needs and abilities, and some skilful teaching which focuses on the children's needs and interests. Although many of the activities are adult-led, there are also many opportunities for children to lead their own learning through play and other activities and to start to develop some independence. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff keep extremely accurate and detailed records of children's outstanding achievement during their time in the department, and these are assessed and moderated against a variety of assessment systems.

The Early Years Foundation Stage accesses the full range of support services available to the school. The opportunities for outdoor learning are well established and there is continuity between the outdoor and indoor provision, which is used very effectively. The care and welfare needs of all children are met very well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school so that areas of strength and weakness can be identified and used to raise standards.

- Develop systems for monitoring pupils' progress so that the school is able to monitor the progress of groups of pupils as well as individuals.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Generally, standards attained by pupils are exceptionally low, although some pupils are working at lower National Curriculum levels. Pupils are assessed thoroughly on entry to school and their individual progress is tracked throughout their time in the school. This information, supported by inspection evidence, indicates that overall, pupils make good progress. Some pupils also make outstanding progress and a minority make satisfactory progress. The school's systems for monitoring progress are not yet refined enough to make judgement about groups of pupils or to evaluate progress in different subjects consistently. The pupils who make less progress do so due to factors such as medical conditions or a record of poor attendance, and the school works hard to overcome these obstacles to learning.

Staff know the pupils, and use their knowledge of their backgrounds and their needs very effectively to set targets which are realistic and challenging. Generally, pupils achieve or exceed these targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are outstanding. Pupils are very proud of their school and their behaviour throughout the inspection was very good. They enjoy coming to school and this view was supported unanimously by the overwhelmingly positive response by parents to the Ofsted questionnaire. One parent said the following about her son, which typifies the feelings of many parents: 'He is kept very safe and well stimulated ... Despite his complex needs, he loves school. He has benefited greatly from the multi-agency support'.

During their time in school, pupils become increasingly independent as appropriate to their needs. This is exemplified by the way the pupils are able to discuss and evaluate their own targets and the targets of their peers in a supportive way. Pupils are also nurtured extremely well, so that they are increasingly able to make their own decisions and choices at a level appropriate to their needs. Pupils adopt very healthy lifestyles during their time in the school, as seen by the high take up of a wide range of extra-curricular activities and the PE, food technology and personal social and health education (PSHE) contributions to the curriculum. Behaviour is managed very effectively by staff and by the pupils themselves and, during their time in the school, pupils develop social skills and are better able to relate to those around them. They have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare, but when it has occurred it has been dealt with to their satisfaction.

The regular whole school activities support the curriculum well in promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very effectively. The themed days and weeks in which the pupils participate help to raise awareness of different cultures and religions. A range of visits and visitors also promote cultural awareness through activities such as St George's Day celebrations and visits from African and Indian dancers. The school has many links with the local community, including with local schools and colleges. Parents are very welcome when they come in to the school, and participate in the school by sharing their interests and skills with the pupils.

Good progress in basic skills, enterprise work, ICT and social skills, alongside an effective work experience programme, means that pupils develop workplace skills extremely well. In the sixth form, this excellent work is built upon so that independence skills are developed further and students are able to make informed choices about their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching in the school is good. Most lessons seen during the inspection were good, although some were outstanding and some were satisfactory. At present, the school is not monitoring the quality of teaching effectively enough to ensure consistency throughout all areas of the school.

Systems for tracking the progress of all pupils are new, but staff know which levels the individual pupils are working at. Some pupils are aware of their targets although this is inconsistent due to the learning needs and abilities of the pupils. Teachers and support staff know all of the pupils well and the best lesson planning shows that work is well matched to pupils' individual needs and interests. This allows all pupils to be engaged and effectively challenged in these lessons. The better teaching leads to good progress for pupils, and they demonstrate good attitudes to their learning and behaviour. Teaching assistants provide valuable support in lessons as they know the pupils well. Pupils work independently or collaboratively, as required, and they are starting to be able to evaluate their progress against their targets. In the less effective lessons, pupils can become disengaged due to inappropriate tasks set, and their progress is lessened.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Overall, the school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils effectively. This shows in the good progress made by pupils at Key Stages 1 to 4. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the sixth form, the curriculum is outstanding, due to all pupils being effectively engaged at all times in these areas. The school is currently reviewing the curriculum across the school, so that it more effectively meets the needs of all pupils. The management of the school are also aware that the grouping of pupils needs to be more flexible to better meet their individual needs. There is an impressive range of activities to support the curriculum. There are good links with external agencies to support learning, including local authority support services for pupils who are visually or hearing impaired. The recent introduction of MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) as a part of the PE curriculum has been very effective in focusing support on pupils' physical development. This has also had the effect of developing pupils' independence and confidence. The sports co-ordinator has planned a range of activities which involve partnerships with other schools and colleges, including other special schools in the region.

The school organises several after-school and lunchtime clubs around sports and art, and these are well attended. The wide range of themed days give pupils a 'hands on' experience of what it was like to live in Roman times, or to go to France and drink in a French café. The school has been involved in local festivals, such as the Lancashire Schools Dance Festival, and the choir participates in the celebration of friendship at the local city guildhall. A range of visitors to the school, including some parents, broaden pupils' experiences through a variety of learning

opportunities across the curriculum. There are plenty of visits from the local services, including the police and fire services, to further enhance awareness of the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is an extremely supportive and caring environment which has high expectations for all of its pupils. There is a range of support plans, such as moving plans and personal care plans, in place for pupils as appropriate and these are agreed and shared with parents and staff for consistency. All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils are well educated and looked after during their time in the school. An impressive range of support is available within the school and from external agencies to meet the individual needs of pupils, so that they progress well.

There are clear policies and procedures in place to promote child protection, which are understood by all staff. Risk assessments are in place for all areas of the school's work, and are thorough and carefully attended to. The school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding, and accidents and incidents are recorded thoroughly. There have been no recorded incidents of racist behaviour in the school. Pupils are often aware of their own challenging targets for learning and their behaviour. Targets are set through the annual review process and reviewed regularly. Many pupils are involved in assessments of their work and complete an annual advice form for their annual review meeting. Pupils are also involved in developing the school through the use of the school council. Parents are very appreciative of the advice and the support provided by the school. This starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continues throughout the pupils' time in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The school has a clear vision and direction for improvement although this has not yet had time to impact fully on the outcomes for learners. The school's management knows the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. Plans are now being implemented to improve the provision further, based on this knowledge.

There is a shared belief across the school community in the school's work. The leaders of the subjects have started to evaluate the work of their departments and this is starting to promote greater consistency between subjects, but is at an early stage. Some targets are set for improvement, which are helping to raise standards in the school, although these need to be more firmly based on monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. The systems in place to track the progress of individual pupils identify any potential underachievement, so that support can be provided as necessary.

Equality of opportunity is promoted well, and diversity is celebrated and valued. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The improvements since the last inspection and the plans for future improvement demonstrate the school has a good capacity to continue to improve. The governing body provides satisfactory support and challenge to the leadership of the school. Governors are increasingly well known to members of the school community through a planned increase in their involvement in the school. The school provides good value for money.

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	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?	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
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.

²IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	IE ²
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	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3	
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	3	
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**

3 July 2009

«LetterTPupils»

Dear Students

Inspection of The Coppice School, Lancashire, PR5 6GY

Thank you very much for making my recent visit to your school very interesting and enjoyable. I particularly enjoyed seeing you work and meeting you.

I found that your school is a good school and it is outstanding in some areas. The headteacher and your teachers and teaching assistants are all working very hard to make your school even better. You enjoy coming to school and you make good progress while you are there. Your parents and carers are very happy with how the school educates you all. They all said that they were very happy with the school. Your personal development is a particular strength of the school and you work very hard to improve your personal skills and to manage your own behaviour when you have difficulties. You all have very good attitudes to learning and you should be very proud of yourselves. I know that the staff are all proud of you.

I have asked the school's leaders to improve two things to make the school even better than it is now:

- make sure that they know how good the teaching is in the school by monitoring it more closely
- use their knowledge of your levels of work to make sure that all of you are progressing as well as you can.

You can all help with this by telling the teachers what is good and what makes you interested, and you can make it clear what you enjoy and what helps you learn.

Best wishes

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector