

Gosberton House School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120749
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327353
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	84
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	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jamie Gordon
Headteacher	Ms Louise Stanton
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	11 Westhorpe Road Gosberton Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 4EW
Telephone number	01775 840250
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Age group	2–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the evidence of current pupils' progress towards independence by applying their knowledge and skills in new contexts; the ways in which the school's leaders use their monitoring and evaluation to identify areas for improvement and how the school's evaluation of EYFS helps it understand its strengths and weaknesses. Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons, the pupils' work, discussions with them, members of the senior leadership team and the Chair of the Governing Body, a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail and inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own evaluations, as given in its self-evaluation form, were unjustified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is situated in the village of Gosberton, close to Spalding and Boston. Nearly all of the 84 pupils have a statement of special educational need and the large majority of these have been written in response to pupils' autism spectrum disorders (ASD). A few pupils have moderate learning difficulties (MLD), which reflects the near completion of the school's transformation, over the past eight years, from provision for MLD to that for ASD. As a result of their learning difficulties, pupils' attainment on entry is exceptionally low. The EYFS has 15 children who have learning difficulties, the majority of which are linked to ASD. There is a class specifically for pupils with complex ASD linked with severe learning difficulties (SLD). The school provides support to schools and nurseries in South Lincolnshire who have ASD children on roll.

Gosberton House School has been accredited annually, since 2003, by the National Autistic Society. It has many awards for the quality of its provision including Healthy Schools Award, Investors In People, Inclusion Quality Mark, Active Schools Award, the Eco Mark and Arts Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Gosberton House is an outstanding school. It meets the needs of all of its pupils exceptionally well. The excellent provision for pupils is the result of the school's clear aims and determination leading to it developing substantial expertise in working with autistic pupils in particular. Parents are extremely pleased by the very positive effects on their children's development and many are overjoyed by the enormous progress their children make. Their comments are packed with superlatives such as: 'a wonderful, well run, school with brilliant caring teachers who are led so wonderfully well by a fantastic headteacher'. This encapsulates perfectly the school's many excellent qualities. Pupils are provided with outstanding care, guidance and support, ensuring they are fully safeguarded and given every opportunity to achieve in lessons and make progress in their personal development.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. This is especially so of the headteacher whose clear direction, high expectations, commitment to the whole school community and extremely skilful management have produced a unified school and exceptional teamwork. This is matched by the contribution of the senior management team and through the excellent support provided by governors. Everyone has a clearly defined leadership role; attention to detail is superb and this underpins, across the school, the high degree of consistency in approach, and its extensive impact, in meeting each pupil's needs. The sharp focus on effectiveness comes from the team's rigorous self-evaluation, leading to a strong culture of continual improvement in the school's provision including that in EYFS. Pupils' progress is tracked systematically and information is used to set challenging performance targets for the school. The capacity to carry on improving is substantial and sights are firmly fixed on refining provision for pupils with even more complex needs, on which a very good start has been made, as well as extending further the school's remit into other areas of special educational need, such as sensory impairments.

At the heart of the provision is the curriculum, which is outstanding. It clearly reflects a deep understanding of pupils' difficulties with communication, social interaction and behaviour. Across the whole curriculum, work and activities constantly focus on promoting learning in these areas. An especially good link with the speech and language therapy service helps enormously with planning to meet pupils' communication needs. There is hardly a time in the day or a space in school that has not been considered and used to support learning and personal development. Walking along a corridor, for example, reinforces objectives for pupils such as being part of the group, moving in an orderly, purposeful way to assembly or lunch.

The school's grounds are thoughtfully arranged and equipped to encourage pupils' imaginative play, physical activity and working together. Breaktimes are filled with energetic play, joy and friendship. The curriculum is broad, challenging, interesting and thoroughly enjoyable for pupils. Activities promote a healthy lifestyle and awareness of staying safe very effectively. The curriculum is greatly enriched with clubs, visits and visitors which give very good emphasis to sports and the arts. Overall, pupils' work and activities make a substantial contribution to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is planned in line with the National Curriculum so topics match what pupils of the same age would be engaged on. This is of great help to those pupils who are ready for mainstream schools and the school's track record in supporting such moves is very good. For the few pupils with SLD, planning focuses very well on them consolidating basic skills and the behaviour they need to become good learners.

The richness of the curriculum permeates teaching making it, and the quality of learning, outstanding. Thorough assessment practice, very good knowledge of pupils, and consummate expertise in meeting their needs, including those with SLD, ensure lesson objectives are very clear and expectations are really high. Teaching methods are systematic; visual and practical approaches to learning are very effective, for example, through the use of digital whiteboards. Teachers and their assistants are highly trained, work as very effective teams and make sure pupils achieve lesson aims. The highly consistent and effective ways used to engage pupils, and to manage their behaviour, mean they become thoroughly involved in learning.

Work is closely matched to every pupil's capabilities and is challenging. The very good emphasis on pupils being co-operative, working independently and taking responsibility for their own learning is a highly successful feature in many lessons contributing much to pupils' outstanding personal development. Here, and academically, achievement is outstanding because pupils make exceptional progress in the areas where it matters most to them. The targets set by the school are met and often exceeded. Pupils rapidly acquire knowledge and skills to read, write and calculate, using money in particular. They also make fast progress in becoming independent, taking on increasing responsibility and relating to others positively.

The work of school council, recycling activities, and managing a whole host of small responsibilities around school make it possible for pupils to contribute in very positive ways. While they have the opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in new and different situations, such as using shops, pupils do not always find it easy to achieve this. It is an aspect of learning the school is keen to continue to improve. However, this does not detract from the fact that pupils' preparation, overall, for secondary education and mainstream school is outstanding.

The school has a significant impact on bringing the community closer together. Links are very well established, in particular with parents and other schools. The school is also closely involved with village life, local Lincolnshire festivals, sports and the arts and, where possible, shares its resources with its community. It is a strong feature of the curriculum that a good deal of pupils' learning takes place outside in the locality and this provides many ways in which they can make significant contributions. Parents have access to a continuous stream of advice, training and support in caring for, and managing, their children. The comments from parents are very positive in this regard. Local primary and secondary schools rely on the expert advice and support provided as an outreach service, and value this enormously. They say it is a vital contribution to their capacity to sustain their ASD pupils in school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The strong links forged with families during the Early Years Foundation Stage help to ensure that children settle and quickly make progress. Their progress is outstanding and is especially rapid in the areas of communication, social skills development and self confidence. The curriculum is planned carefully and adapted sensitively to provide for the children's differing needs. Staff and professional support agencies work closely together to monitor and report progress and to ensure sufficient challenge and choice is maintained for every child. Personal development is outstanding. Children quickly become aware of themselves as individuals, learn to share and take turns and to respect and acknowledge each other's achievements. Staff work extremely well together, set high expectations and keep the best interests of children at heart. One very satisfied parent said: 'I'm over the moon with them and consider the staff to be part of my family'. As a result of the school's support and encouragement, parents are actively

involved in helping to improve children's learning at home. The children's indoor and outdoor environments are lively and stimulating with a very good range of learning resources. Their health and welfare are given a high priority and the careful assessment of risks is firmly embedded in practice. Leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding, with a very clear focus on continuous improvement, based on accurate self-evaluation and knowledge of each child's individual learning and development needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Broaden achievement by developing pupils' opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in an increased and wider range of contexts and challenges.

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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
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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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
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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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
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
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**

22 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gosberton House School, Gosberton PE11 4EW

Many thanks to you all for making our visit to your school so worthwhile. It was a rewarding day seeing how much you all enjoy school and we were pleased by how friendly you all were.

Here are some of important things we found out about your school.

- Your school is outstanding because it does everything it can to make sure you get a really good education.
- All of the staff work incredibly hard and are very concerned that you all do well.
- Your school has everything you will need to help you succeed and it gives you lots that you can do that is interesting and enjoyable.
- All of the work and activities you do are really good in helping you make very impressive progress.
- You are learning all that you will need to know before you move to your next school.
- The staff are really good at helping you behave well, to be responsible and to take care of yourself and others; you have been excellent in following their direction. You are very friendly and helpful.
- Your school does very well in helping other schools and your parents.

Your headteacher and the staff are very good at knowing what needs improving. We have said you should have even more ways than you already have to use what you learn in school to manage most things by yourself, like buying in shops, travelling on buses or using all sorts of information.

While all of the staff have worked really hard to make your school one of the best there is, you have also made this happen by your hard work and good behaviour.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector