

# Fitzwaryn School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123342
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327884
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Blackband

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>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	60
Sixth form	8
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	1
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Matthews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Barbara Harker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 October 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>	Denchworth Road Wantage OX12 9ET
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 764 504
<b>Fax number</b>	01235 768 728

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<b>Age group</b>	3–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school provides for pupils whose special needs range from complex moderate learning difficulties to those with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is a relatively new post 16 unit, the 'Student Centre', which caters for eight pupils. An increasing number of pupils have autistic spectrum conditions. The school was awarded specialist status in 2007, for its work in Cognition and Learning. The school works in partnerships with and provides outreach services to a number of mainstream primary and secondary schools. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in an integrated Foundation Stage class within a local primary school. The pupils are almost all White British with a very small minority from other ethnic groups.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Fitzwaryn was identified as an outstanding school in the previous inspection and this standard has been improved even further. The school's leaders have continued to closely monitor and improve the provision for all the learners. Because of their learning difficulties, the standards reached by pupils in most cases, are exceptionally low, but all pupils do very well in their studies and many make outstanding progress, especially in the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy.

The quality of teaching is excellent. Teachers plan learning activities exceptionally well and underpin this by equally effective assessment of the pupils' progress. The well-qualified learning assistants provide excellent support to individuals and small groups. Teachers make sure that the pupils clearly understand how well they have worked and made progress, and what they need to do to improve further. This is a strength of the teaching in the school. As a result, the pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. The curriculum is outstanding because teachers tailor it so well to each pupil's learning needs. The school's monitoring and tracking of pupils' overall achievement is extremely thorough and accurate. This enables the school's leaders to maintain a clear focus on each pupil's progress. There is well-organised and effective provision to support the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and to support the pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. The school is particularly successful in helping all the pupils to develop their communication through an exemplary partnership with speech and language therapists.

The pupils feel safe and well supported and consequently concentrate well on their work. They make excellent gains in their personal development because of the high level of support and attention they are given and because of the outstanding provision for personal, health and social education (PHSE). They therefore, learn to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave well. The pupils love coming to school. One parent stated that, 'We never have days when he would rather stay at home.' Parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing they will be well looked after and that the school has high expectations of their progress. A parent commented, 'Our son has made progress we could never imagine.' Pupils value the school and this is evident through the excellent relationships they have with staff and other pupils and their very good rates of attendance. Locally, Fitzwaryn is held in high regard, not least because the school offers a valuable specialist support service to mainstream schools.

The headteacher's work has been outstanding in maintaining and improving the already very high standards. A very able senior team supports her and this team has been extremely effective in leading staff in the drive to improve pupils' achievements further. The governing body is supportive and provides a high standard of strategic management. The school's leaders monitor and evaluate each aspect of provision exceptionally well and this has played a vital part in maintaining the pace of progress. The school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

Students, make excellent progress in their personal development because of very well planned procedures to help them to make their own choices and to seek independence. Consequently, they make good gains in their level of maturity and self-confidence. Good teaching results in many students making good progress, especially in their life skills and in their grasp of work

related learning. However, teachers have not yet sufficiently developed focused assessment procedures to measure the small steps in students' progress and so give them sufficiently challenging targets for improvement. This sometimes slows down the pace of their learning. Almost all the students are expected to leave for further education courses. The leadership and management of the provision are developing well for instance in the clear direction which teachers give to developing the curriculum.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The children quickly settle into school life because of excellent teaching and care. Children in the integrated provision make outstanding progress. This is a reflection of excellent leadership and management, which results in excellent teaching underpinned by exemplary record keeping and assessment of the pupils' progress and continuing learning needs. The pupils benefit from the clearly planned EYFS curriculum which enables them to experience structured but fun activities both indoors and outside and which develops their learning very well. Specific staff from Fitzwaryn work on an individual basis with pupils whilst allowing them to integrate as much as possible with the mainstream class. Pupils thus receive a high level of individual attention but have every opportunity to play and socialise with other children. As a result, the pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. This provides a very good basis for their future success.

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

- In post 16 provision, use focused assessment to accurately record the small steps in pupils' progress, so that the pupils may be given challenging learning targets and so increase the pace of their learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

All the pupils achieve well and many make outstanding progress. Young children in the Foundation Stage come on in leaps and bounds and pupils maintain this momentum as they progress through the school. The outstanding support for pupils with the most severe impairments ensures these pupils make excellent progress in very small steps. There is no evidence of underachievement by any individual or in any group. The pupils' progress in acquiring basic skills is outstanding and this has a significant impact on their achievement throughout the curriculum. Most pupils make excellent progress in meeting challenging individual education plan (IEP) targets because the targets are so well focused on their current learning needs. Pupils in Year 11 and in Year 14 are able to demonstrate their potential through nationally accredited qualifications.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils' excellent personal development reflects their clear understanding of the school's emphasis on giving respect and showing tolerance to others. The school defines this as, 'managing the atmosphere of trust'. As a result, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It was noticeable during the inspection, how often pupils gave warm support to other pupils. For example, pupils were observed, at lunchtime, quite spontaneously offering help to another pupil who had difficulty in holding his fork. Pupils have

also raised sufficient funds to provide a roof for a school in Africa with which Fitzwaryn School has links. All the pupils benefit from well-planned opportunities to work and socialise with pupils from mainstream schools. Pupils learn the importance of healthy lifestyles through the many well-organised opportunities for physical activity. They make excellent gains in their social skills through the many communal activities. All pupils are encouraged to make their views known, for instance through the school's Eco-council. Similarly, older students in post 16 acquire valuable life skills through work experience. Pupils feel safe and confident within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. Bullying is almost unknown. Parents feel welcomed by the school as partners in their child's education. One parent commented, 'Communication is two-way and very effective.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers and their classroom staff are very skilled in making and recording accurate assessments of the small steps in each pupil's progress. As a result, the teachers are able to plan challenging 'tailor-made' activities for each pupil, so enabling many of them to make outstanding progress. This ensures the pupils enjoy their lessons and try their best. They behave very well and maintain very good levels of attention for relatively long periods. Teachers are skilled in implementing specific programmes, for instance, by using symbols and interactive whiteboards to help pupils with autism to develop their communication skills.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy a carefully constructed and rigorously monitored curriculum, which is very well adapted to their individual needs. There are very good programmes for post 16 students and particularly good provision for work related learning. Programmes in the Foundation Stage have been carefully adapted to meet each child's early learning needs. The excellent provision for the development of pupils' personal skills has a significant impact on their achievement. The school's outstanding programmes to develop pupils' communication and basic literacy and numeracy skills are extremely effective in promoting their confidence and access to learning opportunities in other subjects. There is a wide range of activities to take pupils out of the classroom, showing them that they can learn new things in many different situations. This adds substantially to the pupils' social skills, their self-confidence and their interest in learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school's highest priority is to provide the best standards of care for all of its pupils. The pupils benefit from the way that staff make clear to them how well they are doing in both their work and their personal development. As a result, pupils show confidence and have an excellent understanding of how to make their work better and this has a very positive impact on their achievement. Parents receive accurate and comprehensive progress reports for annual review meetings and report a high degree of satisfaction with their level of involvement in their children's education. Pupils receive good advice and support when they are about to leave school. Almost all go on to further education courses.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Because of the excellent procedures for assessment and effective tracking, the management team retain a very good overview of pupils' achievements. They are able to ensure that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities and that their targets are both relevant and challenging. One of the school's many strengths is in the rigorous and effective way managers monitor, evaluate and improve on every aspect of both the school's performance and the pupils' achievements. Governors provide outstanding support to the school. They rigorously audit the school's strengths and areas for development. Morale within the school is very high. Staff members feel fully consulted, involved and valued. There are excellent procedures to manage and improve their performance and to ensure that every member of the school community takes full advantage of professional training. Teachers and support staff, for instance have developed significant expertise in promoting the pupils' communication skills and this has a substantial impact on their progress.

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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<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	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

**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	2
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	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	2

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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	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	1	1
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	1	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1	2
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	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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**

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fitzwaryn School, Wantage, OX12 9ET

Not long ago I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether I could suggest anything to make the school better. You made me very welcome and I enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom and at lunchtimes. Thank you and well done.

I was with you for two days. That was long enough for me to realise that you go to an outstanding school. I could see that you all enjoy school very much. I list below some of the many things I liked.

- You work hard and make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development.
- The many different people at the school look after you very well.
- You are taught extremely well.
- You have an excellent range of activities, including those that help you become independent, make choices and mix with other pupils from different schools.
- Your teachers and other staff are very good at helping you to communicate in your own way and in recording all the progress you make.
- Your headteacher runs the school very well and everyone else, including your parents, supports her work for the school.

I think the school could improve even further if all the staff were to write down all the little bits of improvement that students in the 'Students Centre' make. Then they can set each of them more useful targets to aim for and in that way they can help them to learn even faster. You too can help the school to keep improving, just by going on working as hard as you have been doing!

Please thank your parents for all the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes and good luck.

Yours sincerely

Mel Blackband

Lead Inspector