

Longspee School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113963
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	330210
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryan Sullivan
Headteacher	Sean Pavitt
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2007
School address	Learoyd Road Canford Heath Poole BH17 8PJ
Telephone number	01202 380266
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Introduction

When Longspee School was inspected in November 2007, it was judged to require special measures. The current inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

All pupils who attend the school have statements of special educational need for severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). The majority have related difficulties such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, speech, language and communication needs, conduct difficulties, oppositional disorders and moderate learning difficulties. Nearly all pupils are boys. Almost all the pupils are White British.

The school provides outreach support work for pupils with BESD and associated needs in many of the mainstream schools in Poole. The school has two sites. The vast majority of the pupils are taught on the main site. At the small satellite site, about two miles away, the school provides short-term and intensive support for mainstream pupils in Key Stage 1 whose emotional, social and behavioural characteristics present barriers to their personal and educational development, achievement and progress. The school has achieved Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Since the last inspection outstanding progress has been made in Longspee School so that it now provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. This is especially impressive as at the last inspection nearly every aspect of the school's work was judged to be inadequate. There are now many good features. Its greatest strength lies in the pupils' good personal development, because emotional health is high amongst the school's priorities. Much has been achieved in the last year, particularly in meeting the pupils' emotional needs and increasing the learning opportunities for pupils in science, physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT).

There are several factors that have enabled this to happen. The most significant of which is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the very clear direction of his leadership team who have an unrelenting focus on raising attainment. This has permeated all levels of the line management systems, creating a systematic drive for improvement and an effective learning environment. The impact of this is in the improved standards and achievement of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science. During the last year pupils have begun to put behind them a record of underachievement and are learning how to learn, gaining the satisfaction that success brings. Although standards are overall much lower than those seen nationally for their age, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory and rapidly improving. Teaching and learning are overall satisfactory. There is much good learning but there is inconsistency. Pupils want to be, and are not always sufficiently, challenged further in class.

Another key factor is that relating to pupils' behaviour, which is good. Most pupils behave well and attend lessons ready to work. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection. Pupils now have an increasing desire to learn, as seen by the increase in attendance of the vast majority. Parents have picked up on this, and as one said, 'He now jumps in the car and is eagerly waiting for me to take him to school, whereas before I would have to try to force him to come.' A few pupils are being held back because of their unsatisfactory attendance. The school and the local authority are aware that this is the case and are working towards a resolution.

Over the last year there have been many successful innovations in the curriculum. In the Key Stage 1 satellite, a pilot project to assess the needs of a small number of pupils from another school has enhanced the dialogue and understanding between teaching and support staff from the two settings. Provision in the main school has been enriched by teaching assistants who are now using their degree level knowledge to act as subject mentors at the same time as gaining qualifications to enhance their own teaching skills. An outstanding feature of the school curriculum is food technology. The work done in this area helps to ensure that pupils gain future life skills through cooking nutritious meals, applying cross-curricular knowledge and allows them to gain national success. Sourcing local foods to take part in a national cookery competition increased their knowledge of local businesses and the history of the wider community.

The outreach service to schools and other education providers is rightly still seen by its users to be outstanding. The staff consistently exceed the service targets set by the local authority. This aspect of the school provides outstanding value for money. The quality and impact of this

work is evidenced by the reductions in referrals and the increased levels of confidence and competence in BESD issues in the schools that have used it for training. A further indication is that the service staff have built up levels of trust with these schools. Consequently, they are more open to accept Longspee pupils for taster sessions, inclusion visits and reintegration because they can trust judgements to be accurate and that they and the pupils will be effectively supported.

Given the highly successful improvements over the last year, the school has a good capacity to improve further. A significant reason for the previous deterioration of the school's provision was the lack of considered preparation for the expansion from a primary school to include Key Stage 3 pupils. The school and the local authority have not yet refined the details closely enough to secure the most successful outcomes for the proposed Key Stage 4 extension to its provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work with the local authority to ensure that all pupils on the school roll have the education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that all pupils are challenged to the right level in class so that they all make good progress.
- Work with the local authority to ensure that the proposed Key Stage 4 extension to its provision does not have a negative impact on the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When they start school pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding' is well below the expected levels for their chronological ages. Many of them experience significant difficulties with verbal and written communication skills. While the standards of pupils' work throughout the school are much lower than those seen nationally, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This is because pupils make satisfactory progress from very low starting points. During the last year, pupils' progress in English and mathematics has increased dramatically. Due to a lack of previous adequate provision in science, progress in this area has been a lot slower and not as comprehensive. The arrival of a specialist teacher and the newly equipped laboratory, are now helping this area to thrive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good. Behaviour and attitudes are good in lessons and around the school with most pupils getting on well with each other and staff. Attendance is improving but is still just below the national average, the school is doing all it can to improve it.

The school community has rallied successfully to create an atmosphere in which pupils know they matter and are fully included in its life and work. Peer mentoring is helping pupils to have a better understanding of the needs of others. They appreciate the improved provision of healthy foods and the school council has been instrumental in choosing a new food provider.

Pupils are becoming more involved in making a positive contribution to the community, for example in being members of the school council, participating in competitions, and being involved in charity fundraising activities. Through work experience and other work-related activities, pupils develop well the skills they need for their future economic well-being. Improving academic standards also contribute positively to this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and there is a consistent approach to behaviour management, so pupils are keen to participate in lessons and work well together. Typically, lessons are carefully structured and teachers share the focus with their pupils so that they know what they will be learning. Resources, including ICT, are used effectively to make the lessons interesting. As a result, pupils are attentive and generally concentrate well. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to work with each other, but sometimes the challenge for individuals is not hard enough. The pace of the start of some lessons is too slow, does not retain the engagement of pupils, and does not help them to become effective independent learners. In the best lessons there are clearly defined short and long term targets which are individually tailored. These are constantly referred to so that pupils know their targets and what to do to improve their work and behaviour.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection the curriculum has been creatively redesigned to meet the needs and the interests of the pupils, and has been an important factor in motivating them to attend and to improve their behaviour. A strong element of the curriculum is the flexible provision made for those pupils with particular needs or interests. Excellent links with external providers and organisations complement in-house provision in making available alternative timetables or day release options as part of personalised learning agreements. Examples that are having a significant impact are the weekly farm visits, trips to the Hamworthy Education Centre, and projects with the National Trust.

The school has introduced the International Primary Curriculum and this is helping staff to plan activities and lessons that relate directly to real-life situations for the pupils which is making learning more accessible for them. Provision for work-related learning and enterprise is satisfactory, whilst the provision for personal, health, social and citizenship education is good, supporting pupils' personal development well. Previous weaknesses in meeting statutory requirements have been rectified. This is seen through the impact of the improved provision for PE where pupils have won a county cricket competition and actively take part in street sports and boxercise. Where occupational therapy is needed it is woven into the curriculum to remove any stigma and to make it relevant to the pupils, for example developing fine and gross motor skills in PE and the BMX bike project where pupils learn how to maintain and improve their bikes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a very caring and supportive environment where pupils feel safe, develop their personal qualities, particularly their self-esteem, and make good progress in controlling their behaviour. The school provides a calm and welcoming environment where pupils feel happy and secure. Parents have recognised the changes that have taken place and one said, 'For the first time in many years I am happy to drop off my son at school – I know that he is well looked after now, a fantastic atmosphere for him to learn in after many years he and I are smiling again!'

Provision for ensuring health and safety is strong. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are securely in place and staff are aware of their responsibilities. An excellent database helps staff monitor risk and special educational needs assessments. The help provided by teaching assistants is now effectively focused on helping pupils to make progress in their learning. For those pupils with additional needs there are very good links with external specialist agencies to ensure their requirements are met. More pupils are being reintegrated into mainstream schools and inclusion opportunities have increased, including extended visits to the local grammar school. Transition arrangements at the end of Year 9 are more organised. Pupils and their parents/carers benefit from good advice in helping them make appropriate choices. Nevertheless, uncertainties remain with regard to what the school's proposed future development of Key Stage 4 provision will look like and the impact that it might have. Parents say they are very anxious about this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is very strong leadership from the headteacher and the senior management team that sets a clear agenda for raising standards still further. As a result of this direction, subject leaders monitor the work of their departments well and make careful assessments of particular strengths and weaknesses. The wide range of high quality databases that were set up in January are exemplary in helping the school know itself well, set challenging targets, make accurate judgements about where it is achieving success and where it needs to improve. This, and its restructuring, has also allowed governors to be able to challenge the school about its work and to be in a good position to be able to support future developments.

The 'intensive support group', involving external agencies, as well as other key appointments to the school's staff over the last year, is very effective in enriching personal development, providing advocacy and specialist support for the more vulnerable pupils. The emotional health assessments and resultant interventions through counselling and behavioural support have also been key factors in improving the life chances of the pupils at Longspee, the satellite provision and those involved with the outreach services. The school therefore makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

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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?	3
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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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
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**

27 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longspee School, Poole BH17 8PJ

Thank you for the very warm welcome that you gave me recently when I inspected your school. I particularly appreciated the discussions that I had with some of you and your parents and am grateful to you and them for helping me with my work. I am writing to tell you what I found out during my visit although you can always read the full report yourselves at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

- Longspee School has improved dramatically over the last year. It provides you with a satisfactory education and has many good parts.
- Outstanding work is done by the adults who go into other schools to help train and support staff.
- Your behaviour is generally good and this, along with your very positive attitudes to school and to each other, makes a real difference to how well you can learn in lessons.
- Staff at the school and other adults who come to help and support you are doing a good job at helping you become responsible young people.
- The subjects and topics that you do are more exciting now and are helping you understand more about the world and what it has to offer you as well as making learning more fun.
- More of you are visiting other schools and meeting with children who have different backgrounds and experiences.
- The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and listens to your views in order to make the school even better.
- You are trying harder to control your behaviour and enjoy your learning more by making more of an effort to do your best in all your lessons. Some of you want to have harder work in class and I agree that some of you should.

You have such wonderful adults who are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be. There are a few things which I think would help them to do this so I have asked them to make sure that:

- if older children join the school that younger ones can still behave and learn well.
- you all get work in class that is at the right level for you. You can help them do this by telling adults when the work is too easy for you.
- those pupils who do not come to school often enough learn more.

Thank you again for being so polite and helpful during the visit. I hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and do your best..

Wishing you all a happy and successful future.

Steffi Penny Her Majesty's Inspector