

# Lydgate School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	107801
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	331430
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Morris-King HMI

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

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Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Poulain
Headteacher	Mr Martin Ord
Date of previous school inspection	May 2006
School address	Kirkroyds Lane New Mill Holmfirth West Yorkshire HD9 1LS
Telephone number	01484 222484
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Email address	office.lydgate@kirklees-schools.org.uk

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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one Additional Inspector. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and held meetings with the senior leaders, the chair of governors, teaching staff, three groups of pupils and a group of parents. They observed the school's work and looked at assessment and tracking information, lesson observation records, safeguarding documents, key policies, 33 parental questionnaires and 10 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well the school assesses and tracks pupils' learning and then plans and teaches lessons which meet their needs
- how well pupils achieve as a result
- whether the curriculum meets pupils' needs well at all stages of their education.

## Information about the school

Lydgate caters for pupils with complex needs. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties and some pupils have severe learning difficulties. Around half the pupils also have significant speech, language and communication difficulties. A small number of pupils have a physical disability. Many pupils live a considerable distance away from the school. Pupils join the school at varying points in their school life – some start in Reception while some have previously attended mainstream schools or other special schools. At the time of this inspection there were no Reception age children on roll.

## Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	77	There are no comparative figures for special schools
Free school meals	41%	As above
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	100%	As above
Proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups	12%	As above
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	6%	As above
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	100%	As above

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Lydgate is a good school. The atmosphere is relaxed and calm yet purposeful and focused and pupils' enjoyment of school life is extremely clear. Pupils of all ages and with many different needs are supported, nurtured and challenged and, as a result, they make good progress both academically and socially. Parents' views are extremely positive – they thoroughly appreciate the difference that Lydgate has made to their children's learning and well-being. The capacity for sustained improvement is good. Leaders and managers know the school well. Since the previous inspection they have taken a series of well-focused actions to enhance outcomes for pupils, such as improving the science facilities to enable more active lessons to take place and recording pupils' progress more rigorously. Some monitoring and evaluation activities are not sufficiently systematic or formalised.

An increasing number of pupils joining the school have speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has experienced difficulties in securing sufficient speech and language therapy support to help plan and implement specialist programmes. The school carries out some appropriately targeted work with individuals, but not as much as needed. In some lessons very good strategies are used to help pupils to develop their language and communication skills but this needs greater consistency. The school has started to address this area and agrees that this is a priority to ensure further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Formalise and record more of the monitoring and evaluation activities to ensure that all development in the school is tightly focused on the school's priorities, has impact, is sustainable and can be clearly communicated, for example, to staff, parents and governors.
- Develop pupils' speech, language and communication skills by:
  - working with the local authority to secure suitable speech and language therapy provision for the school as a matter of urgency
  - working with the speech and language therapist to devise and implement appropriate programmes for all pupils who need specific support for

- speech, language and communication
- providing training for all staff on the best ways to promote good speech, language and communication in lessons
- devising and implementing a range of strategies for all staff to use in all lessons and around the school to develop all pupils' communication skills.

## How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

2
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Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Coupled with a constant emphasis on recognising each step pupils take in their development, this enables even the most vulnerable pupils to flourish and to gain in confidence. Pupils of all ages make good progress both academically and socially and greatly enjoy their learning. Some pupils join Lydgate at the start of their education, while others do not join until later, having attended mainstream schools. Both groups progress well. Younger pupils make good progress in gaining a range of important skills, such as reading, writing and numeracy. By the end of Year 11 students gain a range of relevant qualifications, sometimes including GCSEs, which represents good achievement given their starting points. The school's excellent organisation of suitable work experience for both Years 10 and 11 enables students to start to learn important work-related skills and really enthuses them for the next stage of their lives. Almost all students join and complete college courses when they leave the school. Some pupils throughout the school with speech and language difficulties do not make as much progress as they should in this aspect of their development.

Behaviour is good and sometimes in lessons it is outstanding. Pupils often show real respect for each other, for example, a whole class was observed being absolutely silent and listening intently while one pupil read his work out loud. The school's reward systems motivate pupils and help them to behave well. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are given positive support and firm boundaries which enable them to improve their self-control and learn a range of strategies to manage their own behaviour. Where there are difficulties, such as any inappropriate behaviour which might become bullying, these are swiftly dealt with by staff. As one parent rightly commented: 'The negative gets dealt with but it's the positive they concentrate on.' Pupils' good and sometimes excellent attendance reflects the way in which they feel safe, confident and supported when in school.

### *These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4

<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
Pupils' attendance and punctuality	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## The quality of the school's work

The school uses assessment information well alongside its knowledge of individuals to determine how pupils are grouped. Younger primary age pupils are taught mainly in class groups. This allows staff to know them well and helps them to feel secure so they can learn well. Older students benefit from a good balance between being taught in ability groups for some subjects and in class groups for others. This mixture helps them to form good relationships with other students and to learn to be adaptable, while also helping their academic achievement. The curriculum is also suitable for pupils' ages and stages of development. Older students are particularly enthusiastic about the variety and challenge they experience in their physical education lessons, and about their careers education and work experience. The school has sensibly decided to re-focus on the use of phonic strategies in all lessons to help to develop pupils' reading skills.

Teaching is good. Teachers know pupils very well and use this knowledge to match their teaching to pupils' different needs. Almost all the lessons observed during the inspection moved at a good pace, keeping pupils interested. Teachers used skilled questioning to check that pupils had understood and to develop their thinking. The best lessons had a continual focus on the development of pupils' speech, language and communication skills alongside subject knowledge and understanding. Pupils' concentration in lessons is very good indeed because they are well motivated and keen to learn. Support staff and teachers usually work as very effective teams and are responsive to pupils' needs. Occasionally lessons lack sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able pupils.

### *These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment and academic guidance	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and staff are clearly dedicated to the progress and well-being of all the pupils. They pride themselves on how well they know each one and this is a major reason why both teaching and care are so well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders know the school's strengths and areas which would benefit from further improvement and take action accordingly. They recognise that sometimes monitoring and evaluation activities are not recorded rigorously enough, which makes it difficult to revisit them as part of the evaluation process or to share the findings with others. Leaders have worked steadily since the last inspection to improve the school building as much as they are able to. This has improved teaching facilities in science and in information and communication technology. Actions have also improved accessibility for pupils with physical disabilities, although the local authority is aware that more is needed which cannot be achieved by the school alone. A new assessment system has been introduced which has enhanced the one which was already established. The headteacher has worked in partnership with another school to develop a sophisticated tracking system which, once fully in use, should enable the school to analyse in depth the progress of individuals and groups. The governing body is made up from people, including parents, who have a wide range of skills and expertise. Governors are very supportive and have become increasingly challenging and involved in the strategic direction of the school.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents or carers of several children from each class group returned the questionnaire. Many wrote additional comments. Parents' views were overwhelmingly positive. Many parents whose children joined Lydgate part way through their education commented on the difference the school has made to their children's progress, attitude to learning and ability to make friends with others. One parent wrote: 'Lydgate School has a very positive attitude towards my child: without their support, advice and expertise she would not have the opportunity to reach her full



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potential.' This view was echoed by a number of others. Parents noted that the way in which staff listen to them and keep them well informed is very positive and helps them to support their child at home. Almost all comments included a reference to how happy their child is at school. There was some concern among parents that there is not enough focused development of speech, language and communication in school, a view with which inspectors agree.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006-7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006-7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006-7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006-7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



22 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lydgate School, Holmfirth, HD9 1LS

I really enjoyed meeting so many of you when I visited your school with another inspector this week. Thank you for being so welcoming and for talking to us about your school.

These are some of the things we found out from listening to you, talking to your teachers and to some of your parents and watching your lessons.

- Lydgate is a good school where the staff really care about you.
- Your teachers know you well and they give you the right kind of work to do which helps you to make good progress in lots of different subjects.
- You really like coming to school. Those of you who have moved from other schools have made friends well and like the extra help you get at Lydgate.
- You concentrate really well on your work and try very hard to do your best.
- You get on well with each other and you respect each other. For example, when I was in one of your English lessons where you were doing a 'behind the door' poem, you listened superbly while other pupils read their work out loud.
- You get a lot of opportunity in Year 10 and Year 11 to do some exciting work experience. This really helps you to learn important new skills.

We have asked your school to give some of you more help with your speaking.

Thank you again for helping us with this inspection. Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Morris-King  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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