

Lindsworth School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103632
Local Authority	City Of Birmingham
Inspection number	336119
Inspection dates	29-30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Trevor Watts

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Sarah Skurr
Headteacher	Mr Frank Kelley
Date of previous school inspection	8-9 May 2007
School address	Monyhull Hall Road Kings Norton Birmingham B30 3QA
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Boarding provision	Lindsworth School
Social care Unique Reference Number	SC017171
Social care inspector	Jackie Callaghan

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Age group	11-16
Inspection date(s)	29-30 September 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with students, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at many school policies and other documents. 23 parental questionnaires were returned, 24 from students and 30 from staff.

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

- teaching and learning, especially of English
- students' attendance and behaviour
- the curriculum for different groups of students.

Information about the school

Lindsworth School is located on two sites. The larger one is at Kings Norton. It is for students aged 11-16 and is located in an extensive campus that includes boarding facilities for some of these students. The more northern site is in Erdington, located in a separate school building in its own grounds. It admits students aged 13-16. All students have a statement of special educational needs because of their extreme social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They have been excluded from other schools, including special schools and student referral units. Many have missed several years of education by the time they are admitted to Lindsworth and their level of attainment is consequently very low on admission. They can be admitted at any time of the year. Many come from highly deprived backgrounds and 34 are in the care of the local authority. The great majority are boys, mostly White British, but almost a third are from minority ethnic groups.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school with many good aspects. Students attain at a level that is well below their mainstream peers, because of their disrupted education before being admitted to Lindsworth. Students in all groups, such as different cultural groups, those with different additional learning needs, or the minority who are girls, all achieve satisfactorily.

Satisfactory teaching is based on strong relationships with students and a positive ethos. Students often learn at a pace that is steady in the major subjects, where lessons sometimes lack a clear focus on what exactly is to be learned. Students are not always given sufficient feedback about their work, or involved well enough in reviewing their learning, to give them a clear idea about what they need to do to improve. Their learning is faster and more highly motivated in some practical or non-academic subjects that they particularly enjoy.

Most students attend very regularly. However, an additional reason for students' overall progress being less than good is the high absence rate among a small minority of persistent absentees.

The curriculum is appropriate to the needs of all the different pupils represented, whether as individuals, or as one of the perceived groups. Students are looked after well; the safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Students are well guided in their personal development.

The good behaviour around school is a dramatic improvement from what it was reported to have been prior to students' exclusion from mainstream education. Students know how to remain safe in different situations and are confident that staff will help them if they need to ask for assistance.

School leaders have evaluated the school satisfactorily. They have some clear insights into necessary developments but have not been sufficiently self-critical in some areas such as teaching. The school's capacity to sustain improvements is satisfactory. This is reflected in the pace with which students' attainments are being raised in English. Leaders have been aware of the need to raise standards for some time. They have begun to analyse students' progress and to implement measures such as additional reading groups, more frequent writing in other subjects and the monitoring of teaching of all subjects. This is beginning to have a positive effect on the standards of attainment at the top of school. However, the pace of improvement has not been sufficiently rapid to have a significant impact.

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About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly in English, by improving the teaching with more specific learning aims, making better use of end-of-lesson reviews of what has been learned, and clearer feedback, including marking, so that students know how to improve their work.
- Make better use of the available data so that students' progress can be analysed, monitored and assisted more closely.
- Improve the attendance of a small number of boys who are persistent absentees, particularly by working closely with the local authority.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of students

3

Overall, students gain skills and knowledge at a satisfactory pace whether they are new to the school or are well established. Students who attend well make better progress than those whose attendance is inadequate. On average, students are learning at a pace that is around half that of their mainstream peers, which is satisfactory for students in this situation and with their histories. Students' progress in English has not been as good as in other subjects, but there were more passes in GCSE English in 2009 than in any recent year. In some practical subjects, students learn at a good pace because the teaching is generally fast paced and non-academic which motivates many students to learn well. In these subjects, such as physical education, technology and catering, they are often attaining at the same level as students in mainstream schools. The proportion of students who gain externally accredited awards has risen in 2008 and 2009. All students who attend regularly gain at least an entry level in English, and many achieve GCSE as well. More than half of the students progress well enough to gain other nationally recognised awards, including full and short course GCSEs, in subjects such as art, resistant materials and physical education. In the latter subject, all students who attend regularly are entered for OCR Nationals at Level 1 and some at Level 2. They gain a range of other qualification in the vocational subjects taken as part of their '2020' provision or through off-site education, including motor mechanics, brickwork, painting and decorating, hair and beauty and woodworking skills. Successful 'taster days' at local colleges and other preparatory initiatives result in virtually all of the regular attenders going on to purposeful further training and education, or to paid employment, often as a result of their work experience activities.

The good behaviour stems from effective staff support and guidance, and from many students seeing that this is their 'last chance', as one put it. Students help each other, perhaps as peer mentors, or through the school council. They also contribute through initiatives such as serving meals to people from nearby sheltered housing.

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Their learning of workplace skills is good through the vocational options, work experience and several outside courses, but is only satisfactory overall because of their satisfactory rate of learning in core areas such as English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The attendance rate is rapidly improving because of the efforts made by the school. It is now 85%, having risen from 63%. Although most students are rarely absent, almost 10% hardly ever come to school, and this detracts from the rate of progress achieved by the school as a whole.

Students' development in spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is especially well enhanced by the broad cultural mix among students and staff, and the great efforts that staff make to help students to develop their interpersonal skills. One pupil summed up their thoughts about staff by saying, 'They give you the best advice they can.' Pupils value highly the counselling and guidance given by different members of staff.

These are the grades for students' outcomes

Students' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Students' attainment ¹	4
The quality of students' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which students feel safe	2
Students' behaviour	2
The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which students contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which students develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Students' attendance ¹	3
The extent of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The teaching is satisfactory, ensuring that students learn basic subjects at a steady pace. In some subjects, such as physical education and Spanish, students are taught at a good pace. The teaching is frequently less focused and challenging in major subjects, such as English and science, where students do not learn as well as they could. Students learn to think more deeply and explain their ideas clearly because questioning is used skilfully by staff. Teachers have a considerable amount of information about students' progress, but do not sufficiently use it to check on-going

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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progress, or to guide their teaching in the short term. For instance, learning objectives can be too broad and so students are not clear about what is expected of them. Oral and written feedback to students is generally positive and raises their self-esteem. On occasion, students do not understand what they need to do to reach higher levels of skill. Teachers and other classroom staff enjoy positive relationships with their students, and manage their behaviour effectively through 'contracts' which record how successful students have been in meeting key targets.

The curriculum provides a satisfactory spread of subjects that is suitable for all the different students who are represented. It includes a selection of work-related options at a '2020' suite of workshops on the main campus. These include bricklaying, painting and decorating and catering, for example. Music is temporarily not available to students at the northern site. Students have the opportunity to gain external accreditation in nationally recognised schemes such as GCSE Entry and Full levels, the Assessment and Qualifications Authority (AQA), Oxford Cambridge RSA (OCR), B.Tech and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). The very small number of students who are in the boarding facility benefit from a good range of evening activities. The wide selection of after-school clubs is open to all students, including, recently, the girls who were not previously able to remain for these enriching activities.

Care, guidance and support are good with robust systems in place to give students a justifiably high level of confidence in their own safety and well-being on site and in the surrounding area. The procedures between care staff and education staff are very effective in ensuring a minimum of difficulties when the very small number of students involved move between the boarding home and the day part of the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has many positive links with parents and carers, including their full involvement in school matters at times. There are many good and productive partnerships that help students' learning in and around school. The forward view of school leaders, managers and governors largely focuses on changes to the premises and senior staffing, rather than raising the attainment of students in basic subjects, particularly English. The school's planning and implementation to develop community cohesion is good, from providing accommodation for the local church and supporting sheltered housing for older

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people, to supporting national and international charities. The current safeguarding procedures are strong and meet all of the latest requirements.

Succession planning for the impending departure of the headteacher takes into account the temporary nature of other senior appointments at the moment. The management team and governors therefore anticipate a positive future for the school. The governors respond well to the school's needs and have been very involved in the school's finance and improvements to premises. They have ensured that all statutory requirements are met, but are not sufficiently challenging in matters of educational rigour such as driving standards upwards.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Boarding provision

The quality of boarding is satisfactory with the service meeting most of the key National Minimum Standards. The seven recommendations set at the last inspection have all had action taken to tackle the shortfalls raised. However, only six of these have been fully addressed. This includes improvements to the residential building, with windows having been replaced. Behaviour management recording now fully details all instances of a sanction and the physical intervention sheets demonstrate that students are encouraged to have their views recorded. Systems for monitoring the care provision have improved and are beginning to be embedded in practice.

The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. Young people benefit from living in a school where the staff team are committed to providing individualised care and support. Staff fully understand the need to promote social inclusion and to challenge any form of discrimination.

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Staff are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and work closely with parents and other health professionals to ensure students' health needs are met. Staff are knowledgeable about students' health needs. However, the administration of controlled drugs is potentially placing students at risk. For example, staff do not audit this medication fully in line with recommended pharmaceutical guidance.

Food and mealtime arrangements are satisfactory. Religious or cultural needs are incorporated into menus, which are flexible and appropriate to personal choices and preferences. Students are involved in the selection of foods and they have plenty of opportunities to fully participate in a variety of physical activities that are enjoyable and engaging. This ensures that students benefit from regular exercise.

Students' welfare is promoted because they have very good relationships with staff and feel able to approach them with any concerns that they have. Students clearly benefit from accessing a residential provision where there is a good focus on safeguarding and protection matters. Staff knowledge and awareness about their responsibilities in this area is appropriate.

Staff are highly committed to supporting and enabling students to develop their skills and socially acceptable behaviour. Students are taught to respect each other and they know that bullying is unacceptable. Any incidents which may be perceived as bullying are dealt with effectively. This view is confirmed by students who state that, 'Staff really do care about us and do a really good job at keeping us safe', and, 'I love sleeping at school, care staff help me make good decisions'. The behaviour management recording systems are good, although physical interventions are not always documented in the bound log book.

Staff view students positively and there is a very friendly, happy atmosphere in the residential unit. The management of health and safety at the school is good which helps to protect students and staff from the risk of harm or injury. There are clear procedures for the recruitment of staff which is supported by practices that are robust. As a result, students' welfare is actively safeguarded.

Staff work unwaveringly to enable students to reach their full potential and to get the best out of life. Students are given opportunities to learn new skills and try out new activities. This includes accessing community activities and resources which help to increase students' self-esteem. They make good progress while staying in the residential unit as they are improving their independence skills, increasing their self-confidence and learning to integrate with their peers and members of the public.

The school provides a very student-centred approach to all aspects of the service's operation. There is a real strength in the close, constructive and professional relationships that exist between education and care staff. Students are successfully supported to learn about and respect different faiths and cultures. One student commented that, 'I feel safe and staff help me understand other people's needs'. Consequently, students have a positive awareness of gender and diversity both within the school and the wider community.

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The school's management team provides appropriate direction and leadership which results in a motivated and committed staff team. Staff feel supported and valued. All staff receive regular supervision. There is good continuity of staff so that students' relationships with them are not disrupted. Staff receive appropriate training which enables them to meet the differing needs of students.

Managers' processes to monitor and audit the quality of care are in place. In addition, external monitoring visits carried out by a governor provide information about the school's operation. However, these reports are weak in detail and do not cover all of the areas required by National Minimum Standards. As a result, this monitoring is not effectively helping senior staff evaluate progress or enabling them to focus on areas of practice that need improvement.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

- NMS 14.17 Ensure that the policy and written guidance, implemented in practice for administering and storing medication, is in line with pharmaceutical guidance.
- NMS 14.17 Ensure that the policy and written guidance, implemented in practice for administering and storing medication, is adhered to in practice.

These are the grades for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	3
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Views of parents and carers

There were 23 questionnaires returned, which is about one fifth of the families in the school, a fairly typical proportion for this type of school. The great majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires were positive about all aspects of the school; 'We are very happy with the school,' was a typical reaction. Over 20%, however, thought that their children did not enjoy school; this was five parents and carers. The inspectors found no evidence that this was the case in school: almost all students were enjoying lessons, and often taking part enthusiastically and sensibly. Most parents think that their children are making sufficient progress, although four do not. Inspectors found that progress is satisfactory overall. The only parent/carer who strongly disagreed that the school was a safe place believed that weapons were 'rife' around school. In fact, it is several months since any kind of weapon has been found. The school takes incidents such as this very seriously, and takes robust and correct actions to deal with them. Only two parents and carers thought that school did not deal with poor behaviour effectively. One parent/carer thought that the school was not preparing his/her child well for the future; the great majority have strong confidence in the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Lindsworth School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 167 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	7	16	70	5	22	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	43	10	43	1	4	1	4
The school informs me about my child’s progress	6	26	15	65	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	13	18	78	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	9	17	74	2	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	3	13	18	78	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	4	16	71	2	9	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	4	17	17	74	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	4	17	14	61	4	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	22	16	71	2	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	17	18	78	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	13	17	74	3	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	5	22	13	56	3	13	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

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.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



1 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Lindsworth School, Monyhull Hall Road, Birmingham B30 3QA

You will remember that your school was inspected recently. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

You go to a satisfactory school that has several good points. You told us how much you enjoy school, appreciate your teachers, tutors and other staff. We saw how positive and trusting the relationships are. Your parents are mostly very supportive of what the school does for you. The school is giving you a sound preparation for your future, with some good vocational and work experience options in the later years. Staff look after you well; many of you told us that you enjoy school and feel safe there. You appreciate being able to talk with staff if you have personal difficulties. Many other organisations help you, including Connexions and the '2020' workshops.

You are making satisfactory progress. Most lessons are planned well, although sometimes it is not clear exactly what you are learning. Although some lessons are fast and motivating, there are other lessons that are not so interesting, and your progress is slow. You know how to stay safe and healthy, and most of you enjoy and take part in many sporting and physical activities. You learn to get along with each other well, help one another and others in the community.

School leaders do a sound job in guiding the school forward. They ensure that you are kept safe and the buildings are kept in a clean, modern and comfortable state.

There are three things that need to improve. Attendance needs to improve. You need to know what is required of you in each lesson and to review your learning at the end. The school is going to plan work carefully and check regularly on your progress. You can help by attending regularly.

With my best wishes

Trevor Watts

Lead Inspector

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