

# The Lyndale School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105136
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	336431
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alastair Younger

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	34
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Tom Harney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs P Stewart
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Lyndale Avenue Eastham Wirral CH62 8DE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Six lessons were observed and six teachers seen. In all, over a half of inspection time was spent looking at learning. Discussions were held with a parent, individual pupils, a governor and several members of staff. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, curriculum planning, the results of monitoring by senior staff and the School Improvement Partner and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Twenty-seven parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the level of challenge for all pupils
- the achievement of the more able pupils
- the accuracy of self-evaluation.

## Information about the school

This is a small special school for boys and girls with complex learning difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Three-quarters of the pupils are children with profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is a very small minority of pupils with severe or moderate learning difficulties. Over a half of all pupils have very profound medical conditions, some of which are life limiting. Boys outnumber girls by about two to one. Nearly all pupils are White British. There is currently one looked after child on roll. The school is subject to local authority reorganisation proposals.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a happy and very popular school. It enjoys the strong support of parents. Pupils enjoy attending and staff are proud of their considerable contribution to the learning and well-being of pupils.

The care, guidance, support and safeguarding offered to pupils are outstanding. They are complemented by exceptionally effective partnerships with parents and a vast array of school based professionals, including medical and therapeutic workers. These partnerships ensure that individual needs are exceptionally well met and that equality of opportunity is outstanding.

By exploring and developing the ways in which pupils communicate, the school makes an outstanding contribution to their ability to stay safe. Parents find this deeply reassuring because it means that their children can communicate any sense of anxiety or discomfort that pupils may find threatening or concerning. Pupils receive exceptionally good guidance as to how they can contribute to their own health. Diets are very closely monitored. Staff are exceptionally well trained in the feeding of pupils through gastronomy tubes and those pupils who can sample small amounts of liquidised food are encouraged to do so to experience and develop a sense of taste. Pupils contribute a huge amount to the community. Those with independent mobility are considerate in their actions and the cheerfulness and general demeanour of pupils is a good example to others. Everything possible is done to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well but occasionally learning objectives do not state with sufficient precision exactly what it is that teachers expect pupils to learn over the course of a lesson. High quality outdoor spaces are used well for recreation but less well as a valuable learning environment.

The school ensures that staff receive regular, high quality training to enable them to meet the changing needs of pupils. Good practice is openly shared. Leaders and managers have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and where improvements can be made. On a day-to-day basis, the school runs very calmly and smoothly. With the full confidence of parents, pupils and staff, the school has a good capacity to keep improving.

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

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that learning objectives are precisely stated so that incremental gains can be recognised and seen as definite signs of progress.

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- Make better use of outdoor areas as a learning resource by conducting an audit of how they are currently used, developing a plan for enhanced usage and subsequently evaluating the effectiveness of changes on learning and personal development.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils learn well in lessons. They are attentive when their medical conditions allow them to be and they behave well. Those with speech enjoy joining in with discussions and answering questions. Those without any means of verbal communication make a great effort to convey their understanding of what is going on either through gestures such as eye movement, pointing or using technological aids. From extremely low starting points most pupils make good progress. There are a few who regress because of changes in their conditions or medication. When this is the case, achievement remains good.

Although attendance is low, it is always accounted for by legitimate reasons, usually medical. Many pupils are repeatedly admitted to hospital for short periods of emergency or precautionary treatments for conditions which can at times be life threatening. This is why the judgement for future economic well-being does not reflect that for attendance but is weighted heavily to the acquisition of communication skills.

Parents are confident that staff can support their children and offer reassurance when needed. The relaxation of pupils in the presence of skilled staff is often the best indication that they feel safe. The school has an active school council, through which pupils can convey their views. When a new sensory garden was being planned pupils contributed by asking for, 'buttons to work things'.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>4</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers have an excellent understanding of the barriers pupils face in their learning. They are particularly skilled in promoting communication and recognising the many different ways in which pupils approach tasks. Teaching assistants often work extensively with a single child, developing relationships that help them to develop a comprehensive understanding of that child. This makes them ideally placed to gauge pupils feelings and recognise tiny signs of acknowledgement or understanding or, conversely, of anxiety or discomfort. The most effective teaching fully involves all pupils in positive learning experiences, closely linked to individual targets. Statements of learning objectives linked to these longer term targets are not always sufficiently precise. This is particularly the case when they refer more to pupils experiencing something rather than what they will learn by doing so. Teachers take care to make sure that pupils remain realistically challenged throughout lessons. The more-able pupils are expected to contribute more to their own learning and work with greater independence. Teachers are adept at balancing new learning with the need to keep reinforcing previous learning.

The curriculum is very specialised. It meets all requirements and focuses very strongly upon the promotion of communication, personal, health and social education and the sensory awareness of pupils. A strength of the curriculum is the way in which the need for reinforcement of learning is addressed by varied and innovative means rather than repetition. Excellent use is made of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' experiences. The school has some excellent outdoor facilities including a sensory garden and well equipped hard and soft play areas. At present these facilities are well used for recreational purposes but not sufficiently used to provide outdoor learning activities and opportunities.

The school works tirelessly to ensure that pupils are exceptionally well cared for, guided and supported at all times. By making on site provision for multi-disciplinary teams, disruption to learners' education is minimised. Specialist support for individuals nearly always comes to pupils in class rather than pupils being withdrawn to other settings. This means that pupils can stay involved in their lessons and not miss out on anything important. Staff share an extensive range of specialist skills including oxygen handling and gastronomy feeding. They are also acutely aware of the many forms of seizure that

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pupils can experience and the need for urgency in dealing with them. Transition to other schools is very carefully managed so as to alleviate the concerns of pupils and parents.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have taken great care to ensure that the school remains well placed to serve the increasing severity and complexity of pupils' needs. They have done so by engendering a strong sense of pride and ambition amongst all those who work in school. Good quality training has been provided to ensure that staff stay up to date with current best practice in their highly specialist field.

Leaders and managers have an excellent awareness of the specific needs of pupils and the implications this may have, for instance, for those with chronic or long term medical needs. Care has been taken to ensure that accommodation and resources have been developed to meet these needs and to ensure full equality of opportunity for all pupils. Individual governors bring to the role an extensive range of relevant skills including financial management. Parent governors play an excellent role in promoting communication and developing provision in line with the wishes of families. Parental involvement is further facilitated through home-school books, newsletters, parent support group meetings and a strongly promoted open door policy.

Self-evaluation is complicated by the fact that many of the criteria used to guide evaluation are very difficult to apply to nature of the school's roll. Nevertheless, leaders and managers have perceptively interpreted guidance and have been able to build up a good picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses in order to guide improvement. Safeguarding procedures are comprehensive. Staff are fully aware of their personal responsibilities. All have been trained in child protection and training extends to new staff as part of their induction. Every child has a 'critical incident' file in which all concerns are recorded for possible future reference. Immaculate attention is paid to the safe storage, transportation and administering of medication.

The school itself forms a very tight knit and harmonious community. Staff and pupils are active in the extended school community of the Wirral. For many years the school has run multi-sensory education workshops for the benefit of museum education officers and has helped to design and produce multi-sensory artefacts. This is one way in which the school helps such places to share what they have with a sector of the broader community.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children always enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at a level below that recognised by the Early Learning Goals. They have no understanding of danger or health and safety issues. They are dependent upon adult support. Only one of the eight children is able to walk. Nevertheless, progress is evident, albeit in tiny steps, often too small to observe over a short period. The evidence of this progress is often anecdotal, coming from parents, staff and sometimes from older brothers and sisters. All evidence is carefully recorded and over time this helps to build up a picture of good progress, including, for instance, the ability to respond to stimuli by turning towards a source of sound or light. Children are well taught by highly skilled and sensitive staff and receive excellent care, guidance and support by classroom staff and many multi-agency workers. The curriculum is good but, as with the rest of the school, not enough is made of outside areas to promote learning. Comprehensive records are kept and the clarity of communication with parents is exemplary. Leadership and management are on a par with the rest of the school.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Many express profound gratitude for the help that they and their children receive and the ways in which this changes their lives. One of the most important things for parents is their total confidence that staff fully understand their children. Typical of many was the view that what parents most appreciate is when teachers precisely describe the child they know as a parent. The findings of the inspection support parents' views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Lyndale 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 34 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	89	3	11	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	85	3	11	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	78	6	22	0	0	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)	20	74	4	15	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	85	4	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	89	3	11	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	96	1	4	0	0	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 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



17 April 2010

Dear Pupils

I am writing this letter in a way that I hope will make it easy for your parents and teachers to share it with you.

- It was a joy to visit your school the other day
- I could tell that you enjoy school
- you are making good progress
- you are becoming more independent
- you are learning how to make your feelings known
- you are learning how to keep safe and healthy
- you are well taught
- you are very well looked after
- your school is well led and managed.

To make your good school even better I have asked Pat to:

- find ways to use outdoor areas more effectively
- make sure that teachers know what they want you to learn as well as experience.

Thank you for being so friendly to me. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Alastair Younger

Lead Inspector

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