

The Foreland School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119041
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339330
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roy Raven
Headteacher	Pam Ashworth
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2007
School address	Lanthorne Road Broadstairs CT10 3NX
Telephone number	01843 863891
Fax number	01843 860710
Email address	foreland@foreland.kent.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 11 lessons, seeing 11 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the senior leadership team and subject leaders for English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education. In addition the lead inspector held a meeting with a small group of sixth form students. The inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment records. The lead inspector analysed questionnaires from 44 parents, 73 pupils and 94 staff.

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

- the achievement of all pupils over time and how well teaching challenges them
- how effectively assessment is used to support learning in the main school
- the extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs in the main school
- attendance data over the last three years
- the effectiveness of leadership and management across all phases of the school.

Information about the school

The school provides for pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are also pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and speech, language and communication needs. In addition, the local authority has designated places for complex learning difficulties, a category not recognised by the Department for Education in official statistics returns.

Currently, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are five children aged under three attending part time and nine aged three to five. All children aged three years and over in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils and students through to the end of sixth form have statements of special educational needs. Those children below three are undergoing assessment. The majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties. Of the others, approximately a fifth have either profound and multiple learning difficulties or physical needs, and the remainder have moderate learning difficulties. A third of all pupils in the school have autistic spectrum disorders. There are almost twice as many boys than girls on roll. Most are of White British heritage, the others being from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Eleven are at the early stages of learning the English language and 22 are looked after by a number of local authorities.

The school shares its site with the local health authority, having four separate buildings for each phase of education. It also operates three off-site inclusion classes, approximately five miles away, one full-time and one part-time at a primary school and one full-time at a secondary technology college. The Foreland Inclusion Support Service offers outreach support to mainstream schools, currently supporting 45 pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals at 22% is above the national average.

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

The school provides a good quality education. It meets its core aim of ensuring pupils have a right to live life to the full, to enjoy themselves and feel part of their school and local community, having the same range of opportunities as their peers elsewhere. Staff ensure pupils are treated at all times with dignity and respect. This ethos underpins the school's work across all phases. A significant strength of the school is the excellent collaborative working with an extensive range of other professionals and specialist organisations, which promotes pupils' well-being and learning particularly well. The school has close links with mainstream schools and a local college of further education and its outreach team is highly effective in supporting not only pupils but also parents, particularly in terms of transition arrangements and in considering other options available to pupils. Almost all parents are highly appreciative of the school's work. One parent wrote, 'I have always been impressed by the school staff. Their supportive and caring attitudes help enormously, not only at school but also at home too. This shows in my child and in the amazing progress being made.'

Pupils are achieving well across the school because of the total education and support package offered. All staff are committed to ensuring the best outcomes possible for pupils. On entry, some pupils are not ready to learn. However, they make good progress in relation to their starting points, particularly in improving their communication skills and the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. This prepares them well for transition to the next stage of their education and, eventually, for life beyond the school. In addition, many make good progress towards the individual goals set out in their individual education plans. However, staff are inconsistent in their evaluation as to how well pupils have made progress towards these targets, thus compromising accuracy in identifying what pupils must do next.

Pupils enjoy their learning. This was particularly evident in the palpable delight shown on the face of a pupil choosing and tasting a blueberry in a senior class for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. In a primary phase class, pupils enjoyed taking turns to use simple communication aids to identify the correct symbols for butter and flour as part of their preparation for making pastry. As a result of the calm and sensitive support from all adults in the school, pupils are safe, persevere very well in lessons, develop their independence and many are developing well their capacity to make informed choices.

Teaching throughout the school is good. Teachers' careful planning, related well to the individual needs of pupils, ensures these are met through a variety of challenging activities. As a result, learning is good, as is the progress all pupils make in their lessons. The good curriculum, reflecting that taught in mainstream schools, underpins the

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school's focus on improving pupils' communication, their key skills, as well as their personal and social attributes. Good quality care, guidance and support is provided for each pupil, including the most vulnerable. Staff ensure pupils are looked after in a safe, healthy and caring environment. This includes the school's own internal zebra crossing which is supervised by staff at the start of the day and end of the day, separating pupils and adults from the large number of buses and taxis used to transport pupils to and from school.

Effective self-evaluation has resulted in good quality planning with a focus on continuing to improve pupils' outcomes. This has contributed well to improvement since the last inspection. The school's major focus has recently been concerned with the possible move to new premises. However, it has recognised that outdoor play areas, including covered areas, in the nursery and Early Years Foundation Stage are in need of improvement so as to provide a more stimulating learning environment and broaden children's choices of activities. In addition, it recognises that insufficient ICT resources in the sixth form are a barrier to even more effective learning. Notwithstanding this, and in the light of improvements since the last inspection, the leadership's ambition and drive for improvement, and continuing success in enabling pupils to make good progress, the school has good capacity to continue improving further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the quality of evaluation of pupils' progress towards their individual academic and personal targets in order to:
 - ensure staff know exactly what pupils have achieved
 - help teachers plan their work for individuals even more effectively.
- Provide more stimulating outdoor play areas, including covered areas, for Early Years Foundation Stage children in order to enliven and broaden their learning opportunities.
- Provide more ICT resources for students in the sixth form in order to:
 - ensure they do not have to wait too long for their turn to use the personal computers
 - improve the pace of individuals' learning.

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

In lessons, all pupils are enabled to consolidate and build on previous learning and make good progress in relation to national expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils benefit greatly from working in groups according to their special needs, where they receive focused and individual attention. This supports the good progress they make. In a secondary class mathematics lesson, for example, pupils worked as small groups to improve their understanding of money using a variety of new technologies and visual symbol cards. Towards the end of the lesson, they then visited the school's own travelling tuck shop (staffed by a sixth form student with support from

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an adult) to buy healthy snacks. In another secondary class lesson, pupils experienced a wide range of sensory stimuli (visual, tactile, auditory and taste) in learning about the Divali festival. Their very positive reactions, facial expressions and oral contributions were indicative of their enjoyment of this activity.

As well as being enabled to eat healthily and develop their understanding of healthy eating, pupils participate in a wide range of physical activities during the school day and as part of enrichment activities off site. Pupils are guided by adult 'active play' leaders at break times and have swimming and Mobility Opportunities Via Education curriculum sessions. The school's work in this respect has been recognised by the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. Pupils respond really well to sensitive intervention from adults. As a consequence, a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere is the norm in lessons. Pupils are involved in the life of the school as a result of their involvement in the school council, pupil surveys and, for older pupils, their involvement in staff appointment interviews. Apart from visiting the local community, attending outreach classes held on two mainstream school sites and courses at a local further education college, pupils' involvement in the wider community is limited. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education, all moving on to the sixth form. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good. They work well together in lessons and are sensitive to the needs of one another. Those with autistic spectrum disorder are developing their awareness of the consequences of their actions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ 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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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The collaborative approach and teamwork of all adults in lessons, as well as around the school, underpin the quality of teaching and the good quality progress made by pupils. On occasion, some adults provide answers too soon for pupils because they do not allow them sufficient time to respond. A key strength of teaching is the focus on promoting communication through the use of visual symbol cards, Makaton signing and teachers' questioning. New technologies are also used effectively to enhance teaching and enliven learning, and support pupils' progress in all aspects of their work. Praise and encouragement are never effusive..

The strength of the curriculum is how well it supports pupils' personal development and prepares them for transition from one stage of their education to another as they move through the school. Because classes are grouped according to pupils' particular special needs, this enables the curriculum to be tailored well to meet these. The school is reviewing the outcomes of this recent arrangement in order to move on the next stage of its curriculum review process. There is an extensive range of enrichment activities which broaden pupils' learning experiences.

Pupils' health, well-being and happiness are at the forefront of the school's strong ethos of care. Pupils arrive with smiling faces and positive attitudes. They leave in a contented manner. A carefully managed programme of annual reviews is effective in supporting pupils as they move through the school and when they leave for the next stage of their education. Procedures for raising attendance rates have improved the overall average and resulted in minimal unauthorised absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, her senior leadership team and subject leaders have a shared vision

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for the direction of the school and a commitment to continuing improvement. There is a sharp focus on monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, as well as on pupils' learning and personal development. Although the governing body is very supportive of the school, it is less effective in its role as a critical and challenging friend as a result of recent membership changes. Practices and procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory, but school leaders and governors are aware of the need for even greater rigour before systems can be judged as good. The school is highly effective in ensuring that all have equality of opportunity, as it is in tackling racial discrimination, which results in a good ethos for inclusion. The school's curriculum audit as to how well it promotes community cohesion shows this is strong within its own community but recognises more could be done within the local community and the wider community beyond this.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

At the heart of this good provision, including that of the nursery, are the in-depth initial assessments to inform the individual programmes for the unique challenges facing each child. A good range of communication devices facilitates effective communication with the children. As a result, they make good gains in their responsiveness and in their communication skills. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make. One commented, 'We have been extremely happy with the excellent nursery and can't praise the staff enough.' High levels of support and care for the individual child, including for their medical needs, and a good focus on safe practice underpin the progress children make. Well-pitched expectations characterise the good teaching. In a physical education

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lesson, a broad range of strategies helped the children make good progress. These included good use of non-verbal prompts, music, action songs, language modelling, calming strategies and tasks which were carefully matched to children's capabilities. However, in other lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the range of activities was not always consistently challenging to ensure the children made the best possible progress. In addition, the quality and range of outdoor play areas restrict children's spontaneity and choices to engage in a variety of stimulating learning and play activities. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and statutory requirements are met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Sixth form

Students make good progress as a result of good leadership and management and a good curriculum, which is matched well to their individual needs and capabilities. The curriculum focuses on students' personal and social development, as well independent learning skills. At the end of a group discussion with the lead inspector, one student's confident comment on leaving was, 'Nice chatting to you.' In a food technology lesson, students had prepared individual couscous salads to take home. Good teaching enables students to continue making progress in literacy and numeracy and to develop their competencies in the use of ICT to present their work and carry out independent research activities. However, the lack of sufficient resources in ICT lessons means students have to wait too long to take their turn at using the personal computers and the waits slow the pace of learning. Teachers record students' progress carefully against the very clear objectives laid down in the range of accredited courses students follow. Work-related opportunities, and attendance at a local further education college broaden students' learning and help prepare them for life beyond the school. One parent commented, 'I am very pleased with the work experience offered by the school.... my son really enjoys his weekly slot.' Students' personal development, including aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. At an end-of-day group gathering, students and adults performed an impressive rendition, through singing and signing, of '(I wish I knew how it would feel to be) Free' by the Lighthouse Family. Good quality care, guidance and support for students contribute significantly to the positive outcomes in the sixth form.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very pleased with the school's provision. In particular, they believe the school keeps their children safe, that they are well informed of the progress their children make and that the teaching is good. This inspection confirms these views. Almost a quarter had concerns about how well the school makes sure their child is well prepared for the future. The inspectors could find no evidence that this was an issue for the school. There were a few other negative responses but no pattern of discontent was evident.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Foreland 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 inspection team received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 148 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	66	14	32	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	80	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	76	8	18	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	50	19	43	2	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	30	68	12	27	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	64	13	30	0	0	2	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	59	16	36	1	2	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)	24	55	15	34	5	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	59	15	34	1	2	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	52	17	39	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	59	15	34	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	64	12	27	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	66	13	30	2	5	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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). 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"> ■ 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 pupil's 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.

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.



5 July 2010

Dear Pupils and Students

Inspection of The Foreland School, Broadstairs, CT10 3NX

Not so long ago, two of us came to your school to see how well you are getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make things even better for you. We really enjoyed meeting you in lessons and around the school, and being able to have a formal chat with a group of sixth form students. Lots of smiling faces throughout the day and the things you told us about showed us that you really enjoy what you do in school. We decided your school is good because:

- the headteacher and her senior team lead the school well and have plans to keep making things even better for you
- the school works really well with lots of other people to support you
- you all make good progress in your learning and personal development
- the staff care for you really well and make sure you are safe
- in lessons, teachers and other adults give you all the help and support they can
- the school makes sure there are lots of exciting things for you to do.

We think the school could be even better and have asked the headteacher to:

- make sure teachers assess the progress you make towards your targets more carefully
- improve the quality of outdoor play areas next to the classrooms for the youngest children in the school
- provide more computers for students in the sixth form.

Finally, we enjoyed our time at the school as well!

Yours sincerely

James Bowden

Lead inspector

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