

The Loyne Specialist School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119892
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339546
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	David Smith

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	110
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Anne-Marie Houghton
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eleven lessons were observed and a total of 10 teachers were seen. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, staff, parents, the chair of governors and a range of professionals who support the school's work with the pupils. Inspectors looked at documents relating to the progress that pupils make and their safeguarding. The plans for the future development of the school were scrutinised. The responses to 73 parental and carer questionnaires were analysed along with 10 from pupils.

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

- whether the full range of the pupils' learning needs are fully met
- how well the pupils engage with their learning and whether all of the available time in class is used effectively
- the school's arrangements for safeguarding
- opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of life in a culturally diverse society
- the contribution of leaders at all levels to continuous improvement.

Information about the school

The Loyne is a school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nearly a quarter of the pupils have additional needs relating to autistic spectrum conditions. There has been an increase in the number of pupils on roll since the last inspection. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Almost all of the pupils are White British. Nearly a third of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Eleven of the pupils are in public care.

The school has Specialist Status for Cognition and Learning. It also has an extensive array of awards including Artsmark Gold, the International Schools' Award and the Lancashire Parent Partnership Award. There have been additions and improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection including the provision of a multi-sensory room.

The school hosts the Unique Kids & Co After School and Holiday Club, which is not run by the governing body. This receives a separate inspection and a separate report which is available on the Ofsted website.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

All aspects of the school's work are outstanding. Exceptional leadership ensures that school self-evaluation at all levels is accurate and is at the heart of the school's outstanding capacity to improve. The staff team is fully involved in school improvement and this helps to promote very positive staff morale. The governors have a wealth of professional expertise and great confidence and make an outstanding contribution to the work and direction of the school. The views of pupils, parents and other key stakeholders make a significant contribution to school improvement also. The school's specialist status has a significant impact on school development. The school is very well placed to move its contribution to the community to even higher levels with their projects to promote healthy lifestyles and well-being across the community.

Teaching is outstanding. The staff are enthusiastic and the teaching assistants make a major contribution to the pupils' outstanding achievement and well-being. The children get such an outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is built upon as the pupils move through the school. Excellent use of assessment ensures that all pupils are fully challenged at each stage of their education. The outstanding curriculum meets pupils' learning needs extremely well and both the enrichment and extension of activities are impressive. Many of the displays around the school are interactive and cater for the sensory needs of the pupils and help to promote an attractive and stimulating environment.

Care, guidance and support are of the highest quality with an excellent focus on the safety and well-being of pupils. They thoroughly enjoy their time at school and attend whenever they can. Relationships are excellent and pupils' behaviour is outstanding, which contributes to the cohesive and harmonious school community. The school council takes a strong lead on the care of the environment. The school's partnerships are a major strength. This includes their excellent work with parents and other agencies to promote the very best opportunities for the pupils. However, their work extends beyond this and, for example, the school's advice on the curriculum and staff training is shared with other schools nationally. This reflects the excellent impact of the school's specialist status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote and extend learning across the generations in relation to healthy lifestyles and well-being with families, schools and the wider community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

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Pupils make outstanding progress and both their enjoyment of learning in class and their achievement are excellent. They are desperate to succeed during their lessons. The use of comparative data on similar schools helps to refine the school's analysis of progress and inform their judgements. The pupils' targets are precisely matched to the pupils' individual needs and are very ambitious. Pupils' progress is linked to their individual special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is no gender variation in progress and the pupils in public care achieve in line with their peers. The younger pupils make particularly marked progress in their communication skills and personal development. This allows them to make excellent progress in other aspects of their learning. As the pupils move through the school their progress in practical mathematics and science are significant strengths. Also, they make excellent progress in art and design, physical education and design and technology. The school is constantly exploring innovative ways of further extending the pupils literacy skills, particularly reading and writing, to build on their excellent progress. Pupils develop great confidence in the use of information and communication technology to help boost their progress. Higher ability pupils are able to access accredited courses when they are in the senior part of the school.

Pupils are very clear that they thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is outstanding. They are confident that there is no bullying and that they help to care for each other. Pupils display the highest levels of respect for each other and the staff, which contributes to the very warm relationships across the school. Lunch is a very pleasant social occasion and each pupil has an individual set of targets to help inform their social development. Pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is excellent. They take part in a wide range of physical activities with enthusiasm during the school day and in the extended provision. Pupils' involvement in residential trips makes a major contribution to all aspects of their development. They play a full and active part in their community and are fully committed to improvements to the school and wider community. Work placements are a major aspect of the pupils' excellent preparation for leaving school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The whole-school assemblies are memorable and inspirational events and pupils join in and celebrate each other's achievements. Dance and performing arts are particular success areas and help to extend their cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is outstanding. Staff work exceptionally well together and consistently inspire the pupils to make the very best of their abilities. The staff's level of expertise is a reflection of their excellent training opportunities. Also, a number of teachers have a leading role for their subject within the local authority and this ensures that the school is up-to-date with practice in mainstream as well as special schools. An extensive range of strategies and resources is used to maintain pupils' excellent progress. The contribution of the teaching assistants is exemplary and they help to ensure that all of the available learning time is used fully. The collection, evaluation and use of data are all impressive. The rigorous assessment process ensures that planning meets the learning needs of individual pupils and shapes intervention for groups of pupils with precision. Pupils are given every opportunity to review their own progress and make constructive comments on the progress of their peers. A visual marking code is used consistently across the school so that pupils are provided with feedback and are made aware of how to improve their work. The recording of sensory assessments is an example of best practice and ensures that the very finest steps in learning are celebrated.

The outstanding curriculum is exceptionally well tailored to meet the changing needs of individuals and groups of pupils. The very sharp focus on developing the pupils' communication skills ensures that they can access their learning across the curriculum. The extensive use of new technology makes a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding progress in school. This includes an excellent sensory curriculum that provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities to react to stimuli. The more able pupils are provided with

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a wide range of challenging courses which leads to external accreditation. Opportunities for enrichment are particularly impressive and help to boost all aspects of pupils' development; there is an extensive and imaginative range of activities during the lunch break and after-school. Homework helps to extend pupils' learning and this is supported by new technology. Pupils have opportunities to share their learning with mainstream peers in a range of subjects including music and physical education.

Outstanding care, support and guidance are essential to the school's work and help pupils to feel safe and thoroughly enjoy their time in school. Members of staff know their pupils extremely well and target a blend of support and challenge to enable them to access the wealth of opportunities provided by the school. The staff team and other professionals provide pupils with the skills and confidence to enable them to become increasingly independent. Excellent strategies are in place to support the learning of vulnerable groups. The transition arrangements for pupils at all stages in the school are very effective. Staff work exceptionally well with a wide range of agencies to help sustain pupils' excellent progress in their learning and personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior team provide inspirational leadership and encourage the highest levels of ambition across the school. This is a school that does not rest on its laurels but is always exploring ways to be even better. The school is energetic and proactive in ensuring that its actions have a significant impact on its local community and beyond. The International Schools' Award reflects the success of the school's work. However, the school is considering how it can have an even greater impact on the local community. Staff work extremely well together and their sense of purpose is infectious. As a result, equality of opportunity for each and every pupil is central to their vision. Subject leaders make a valuable contribution to the rigorous self-review process and demonstrate that responsibilities are shared across the school. The school's work with a wide range of partners is exemplary and this helps the pupils to make outstanding progress in their learning. Members of the governing body work extremely closely with the school and provide an excellent blend of support and challenge. They make a very valuable contribution to the outstanding safeguarding procedures which fully meet requirements and which permeate the ethos of the school. Staff training is excellent and the school has produced high quality training materials that are used extensively across

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the country. The school provides excellent value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

All aspects of the provision are excellent and the outcomes are exemplary. A highly stimulating and welcoming environment engages the children. The exceptionally well organised educational programmes reflect the rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of the children exceptionally well. This ensures that they make very significant gains in their learning and in the development of skills that will help them in the future. Children are beginning to show excellent levels of independence, curiosity and concentration. Assessment is rigorous and the information gained is used exceptionally well to guide planning. Outstanding teaching is rooted in expert knowledge and a full understanding of how young children learn and develop. Staff are highly skilled and sensitive in the management of children and their behaviour. Relationships are excellent and children show they feel safe through the confidence they have in the staff, all of whom provide outstanding care, guidance and support. The highly effective partnerships between the school, parents and carers and other agencies ensure the children's individual needs are met and that safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The coordinator and staff team are totally committed to improvement and demonstrate a strong commitment to equality and to the celebration of diversity.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

The students are very proud to be members of the school's outstanding further education department. Outstanding leadership and management have placed a strong focus on the provision of an excellent curriculum that is carefully matched to students' individual needs. Partner institutions make a valuable contribution to the extensive range of courses, which provide challenge for students at all levels. Students respond extremely well to the outstanding teaching and make excellent progress in their age-appropriate, relevant and stimulating activities. The students are inspirational role models for the younger pupils in the school and help, for example, by running a lunchtime club. Also, Year 12 students who join the further education department from other schools are made very welcome and make excellent progress. The development of independent travel is particularly successful and is an example of the positive impact of the school's specialist status. The students thoroughly enjoy taking part in an extensive range of activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Members of a recent camping expedition displayed great confidence in an assembly and made the whole school aware of the details of their adventure. Students make excellent progress in the development of their future economic well-being. This includes projects where they expertly organise a restaurant evening and plan the discothèque for the leavers. Care, guidance and support are excellent and this is reflected in the school's overriding concern to prepare its students fully for when they leave.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

A majority of the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire that was sent to

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them prior to the inspection. Almost all parents and carers indicated great satisfaction with the school in the large majority of statements in the questionnaire. All agreed the school helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle. A typical comment is, 'The Loyne is an excellent school.' A very small minority would like the school to take greater account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors believe the school understandably takes great pride in its partnerships with parents and carers and works very hard to ensure that their suggestions and concerns are valued.

Inspectors had the opportunity to talk with parents at their weekly drop-in session. They spoke very highly of the school. Parents and carers gave examples of how the school has, for example, transformed the confidence and level of independence of their children. They also appreciate the opportunity to join children for lunch and enjoy their involvement in whole school theme days.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Loyne Specialist 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	70	19	26	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	82	11	15	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	64	22	30	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	58	25	34	3	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	54	74	17	23	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	62	23	32	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	62	26	36	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)	42	58	23	32	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	64	21	29	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	64	20	27	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	55	23	32	6	8	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	46	63	23	32	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	66	23	32	1	1	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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Loyne School, Lancaster, LA1 2PZ

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your outstanding school. You made us very welcome, and many thanks for giving up some of your time to talk with us. You take great pride in your work and it was excellent to see so much of it displayed around the school.

You clearly enjoy attending school and we were impressed with the way you looked after each other and with your excellent behaviour. All the staff work extremely hard to make sure that you are exceptionally well looked after and make excellent progress. We think that your activities in class, during lunch and after school are great. In particular, your residential trips look very exciting. Also, the independent travellers in the further education department have every right to be proud of their achievements.

We are confident that your school will continue to get even better. This will be helped by your new swimming and cycling facilities which can be used to help people in the local community keep fit. We are certain that your extremely positive attitudes and hard work will ensure that the school remains an outstanding one.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Smith

Lead inspector

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