

The Willoughby School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120763
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339771
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Aldridge

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
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	77
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Croft
Headteacher	Mr Adam Booker
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2007
School address	South Road Bourne Lincolnshire
Telephone number	01778 425203
Fax number	01778 425284
Email address	adam.booker@willoughby.lincs.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, who spent 40 per cent of their time observing learning in 12 lessons taught by eight different teachers. Inspectors held meetings with staff, governors and pupils. They scrutinised a range of documents including policies, plans and records, and questionnaires returned by staff and pupils and 42 parents. They looked at data on pupils' progress and evidence provided by the school in support of its self-evaluation.

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

- how effectively the school personalises the curriculum to meet individual needs
- whether all staff with leadership roles are involved in monitoring and evaluating the areas for which they are responsible
- how successfully the school is developing its role as a specialist hub to support families of young children and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in other schools.

Information about the school

The school caters for pupils with learning difficulties that range from severe to profound and multiple. Over a third of pupils have autism. The proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Most pupils have a statement of special educational needs; those who do not are undergoing assessment for one. There are eight children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 11 in the sixth form. On behalf of the local authority, the school provides a support and intervention service for parents of very young children, both on-site and at another special school in south Lincolnshire. It also provides outreach support to a group of local primary schools. Its partnership with a local technology college offers Willoughby pupils opportunities for inclusion, particularly for gifted and talented pupils. The school has a number of awards, including one as a Healthy School.

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

Parents and pupils are very pleased with this good school. One parent summed up the school's ethos well by observing that 'it provides not just an education but a whole way of life' for its pupils. Governors and staff have responded well to parents' views in, for example, setting up after-school clubs and a holiday scheme. Partnerships are very well developed, and contribute to high levels of parental satisfaction. Links with a wide range of partners in the community contribute to the excellent standards of care and support that pupils and families receive. Parents and pupils have high levels of confidence in the safety of the school's environment. Mutually beneficial links mean that the skills of staff extend beyond the school gate. These enable Willoughby pupils to access opportunities that they would not otherwise have and support partner schools and services. The school's work with pre-school children with disabilities is highly regarded by fellow professionals.

Pupils achieve well because provision is well matched to their needs. Careful grouping of pupils into classes and detailed planning are important contributory factors. Teaching has many strengths, so that pupils learn effectively and make good progress. Pupils' and students' achievements are recognised through accreditation and the school has identified the need to extend this further, particularly for higher attainers. Staff use a good range of resources to encourage learning, although occasionally these are inappropriate for older pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. In a few instances, staff miss opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, although the two splendid ICT suites are ideal for this purpose. Although pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop an awareness of their own cultural heritage, experiences designed to encourage their knowledge and understanding of other cultures are satisfactory rather than good.

Work associated with the Healthy School award has seen an increase in physical activity and participation rates in these are now good. Most pupils have a nutritious and balanced school lunch, although a few still bring crisps and chocolate bars in lunchboxes. Pupils contribute widely both at school and in the local community. They are prolific fund-raisers for charities at home and abroad and they have a strong voice in the school through the school council. They develop their basic skills well, acquire good enterprise skills. This and their learning about the world of work, help to prepare them well for leaving school.

There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection. In particular, the school now has a robust system for tracking pupils' progress. In the core subjects, it is able to compare the performance of all groups of pupils with others in similar settings. The approach is now being extended to all other subjects. Self-evaluation is accurate

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and helpful in identifying precisely where improvement is needed. All staff and governors play their part in school evaluation and development planning, so that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision by
 - ensuring that resources for learning are well matched to the ages of all pupils
 - extending the range of accreditation for pupils and students aged 14-19, particularly higher attainers
 - maximising opportunities for pupils to use ICT as a learning tool
 - providing further opportunities for pupils to develop their multi-cultural awareness.
- Strengthen self-evaluation by
 - extending evaluation and analysis of pupils' progress to all curriculum subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

All groups achieve equally well, because the school caters effectively for pupils with different needs. The school sets challenging targets and these are reached by the vast majority of pupils. Where they are not, there are valid reasons for this, for example, periods of hospitalisation. A few pupils have medical conditions that inevitably lead to some absence from school. Although the school does everything in its power to support these pupils, absences adversely affect the progress made by these pupils and the school's attendance statistics, which are average. Pupils enjoy their lessons. Warm relationships mean that pupils are keen to do well. Good adult support and adaptations to classes to reduce distractions ensure that pupils who find it hard to remain focused are kept on task throughout lessons. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond well to sensory stimulation, giving a good range of responses such as vocalising, smiling and pressing switches. They co-operate well with the adults who support them. Effective use by staff of visual timetables, timely reminders and prompts about impending changes helps pupils with autism to make smooth transitions from one activity to another. Pupils concentrate well, and try their best to improve, such as when writing. They answer questions readily or respond by using a sign or indicating a symbol.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. All grow in their maturity and confidence as they get older. The many good opportunities for recognition of their achievements help them develop their self-confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour is good and contributes to the good learning in lessons. Pupils have a clear moral code and older ones develop their own set of class rules. They take responsibilities seriously, whether for a class-based job, as buddy to others or as head boy and head girl. They participate as local citizens by recycling, contributing to 'Bourne in Bloom' and planting trees. Their views are taken seriously and acted upon by the

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school. They show their concern for others by raising funds for a variety of causes, such as 'Help for Heroes'. Pupils learn effectively about their own culture through subjects such as art, music and history. Opportunities to learn about others' beliefs and customs are satisfactory.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school tailors its provision well to meet individual needs. Pupils with similar needs are grouped into classes, and there are good levels of staff support. Thorough assessment is used well to plan learning. Lesson plans show clearly what each pupil is expected to learn, by taking into account pupils' individual targets, and detailed records show the next steps in learning. Staff strive to involve pupils by telling them what they are to learn. They give suitable praise and encouragement, recognise successes, and point out what pupils need to work on next time. Teachers and assistants are skilled in

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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teaching pupils with the range of needs catered for in the school. They use a good range of methods and resources to encourage learning, although these are not always appropriate for older pupils. Communication skills are effectively developed through the use of signing, symbols and objects that support pupils' understanding. Occasionally though, staff miss opportunities to use ICT to support pupils' learning. Sensory approaches are used well to stimulate pupils, who make a good range of responses to these. Staff have very good working relationships with pupils, who show trust in them as well as enjoyment of the activities provided.

Timetables are different for groups with similar needs, then further personalised by adding programmes that are linked to individual needs. For instance, sensory circuits are provided for pupils with autism. Opportunities to socialise and additional enjoyment are added through after-school clubs and a holiday play scheme that is much appreciated by parents. Visits and visitors help to bring learning to life, and links with other schools allow a small number of gifted and talented pupils to follow GCSE courses, such as in art.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are very much valued by parents, one of whom noted that 'nothing is too much trouble for staff'. Excellent collaboration with staff from external agencies also contributes to providing pupils with the support that they need. One senior professional describes the channels of communication with staff in the school as 'superb'. Pupils are closely involved in planning for the future, and timely advice and guidance is given on opportunities post-19.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

School improvement planning is closely linked to the school's self-evaluation, and this process involves staff and governors. For instance, governors have taken difficult decisions about the budget and evaluated college links to make sure that these provide value for money. There is a very clear vision for the school and this is well known and shared by staff and governors. Parents are highly valued as equal partners; their views are regularly sought, taken seriously and acted upon. They are given a wealth of information about their children's progress and involved effectively in their learning. Equality of opportunity lies at the heart of all that the school does and it strives to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged in any way. It rightly prides itself on the way its

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curriculum meets individual needs. The performance of girls and boys, and that of pupils with different needs and backgrounds is carefully analysed to make sure that all are doing equally well. Where any small differences in performance are found, staff take suitable action to improve the situation. Internal refurbishment has made the building user friendly for people with disabilities, including those with sensory difficulties.

Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe have a very high profile in the school. Staff are very well trained in all matters linked to this, including in procedures for managing pupils with medical conditions. Staff are vigilant at all times and have a thorough awareness of individuals and their particular needs. Governors regularly check that statutory requirements are met and recruitment procedures are rigorous. Wide-ranging assessments ensure that risks are reduced to a minimum.

The school has considered ways in which it can better promote community cohesion and has drawn up a suitable action plan. However, evaluation of activities is at an early stage.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff liaise very effectively with parents before children join the school and during their stay. Relationships are very supportive, kind and caring, so children settle well and clearly feel safe and secure. The staff form a skilled team that works well together. Routines are well established and good organisation ensures that children's individual needs are met effectively within the planning for the six areas of learning. Resources are good and used well. For instance, children learn to communicate with one another when

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they look through a window in the tower in the sensory room to see who is inside. Screens are used flexibly in class to reduce distractions and enable children to focus on activities. The outdoor area is satisfactory. Plans are in place to develop this area to make it more stimulating and appealing to young children. Teaching is consistently good and children make good progress as a result. Children are encouraged to be independent, such as putting on their own coats. The coordinator has high expectations and knows what aspects of the provision need to be developed. Detailed assessment enables the setting to evaluate children's progress. Staff use a range of indicators, such as reduction in incidents, to evaluate the progress of children who attend the school to have their needs assessed.

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

Good provision in the sixth form enables students to achieve well. The range of learning experiences is effectively matched to students' ages and abilities. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties have the same opportunities as others to take part in enterprise activities, learn about citizenship and opportunities beyond school. College links broaden learning experiences and students contribute very well to life in school, for example, by taking on responsibilities, recycling materials and improving the school environment by planting out tubs for the grounds. Students are taught well and their learning is good. They are co-operative and well focused during lessons and show interest in tasks. They make good progress in all areas, including learning about healthy living, leisure and recreation and acquiring daily living skills. A 'work week' provides students with additional opportunities to learn about the world of work from visits and visitors. Students' achievements are recognised by a satisfactory range of accreditation, such as Adult Literacy and Numeracy awards. Leadership and management of the setting are good. There are robust procedures for tracking students' progress and comparing this with students in similar settings. The school has identified the need to extend the range of accreditation to fully reflect students' achievements, particularly the more able.

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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

Parents are delighted with the school. In a high return of questionnaires, all were very positive, apart from a very small number who did not agree that their child is making enough progress at the school. Inspectors agree with the vast majority of parents that pupils make good progress. Several parents wrote of the 'dedicated, approachable and caring staff'. Others described how the school has transformed their child's educational experience. Parents appreciate the wide range of opportunities provided for pupils and the fact that they thoroughly enjoy school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Willoughby 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 77 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	90	4	10	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	76	9	22	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	90	4	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	76	10	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	68	13	32	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)	27	66	12	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	80	8	20	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	83	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	80	8	20	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	93	3	7	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	93	3	7	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 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

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 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 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.



8 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Willoughby School, Bourne, PE10 9JE

Thank you for making us welcome at Willoughby. We enjoyed our visit. There are many good things about the school.

You make good progress.

You behave well.

You all feel quite safe.

You take lots of exercise and most of you eat a healthy lunch at school.

You do lots of things to help at school and in the community. You also raise funds for many charities.

Teaching is good.

Staff take excellent care of you and work very well with other people to make sure you have the help you need.

Your parents are very pleased with the school.

There are some things for staff to improve.

Older pupils will be given more grown-up things to help them learn.

You will get more certificates from outside school to show what you have learned.

Staff are going to help you use computers in even more lessons.

They will help you learn about how different people live their lives.

Teachers are going to find out how well you are all doing in all the subjects they teach you.

You could help in one important way, by making sure that you always eat a healthy lunch at school.

We wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Sue Aldridge

Lead inspector

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