



Linwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 113961
LEA Bournemouth

Inspection number 274833
Inspection dates 21 - 22 June 2005
Reporting inspector Mike Smith

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Special	School address	Alma Road
School category	Community		Winton
	Special		Bournemouth
Age range of pupils	3 - 19		Dorset
			BH9 1AJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 525107
Number on roll	173	Fax number	01202 525107
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Michael Mitchel
Date of previous inspection	28/06/1999	Headteacher	Steve Brown

Age group	Published	Reference no.
3 - 19	July 2005	274833

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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of Linwood School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Linwood is a large special school catering for a wide range of learners with special needs aged 3-19. Just under a half of learners come from Dorset, Poole and Hampshire LEAs and most are white-British. Very few come from minority ethnic backgrounds or have English as an additional language. Currently there are 14 looked-after children, with an additional 24 requiring respite care. All learners have statements of special educational needs and a high proportion is entitled to free school meals.

The school has received several national awards in recognition of its outstanding leadership and achievements in special education. The school is involved in a range of inclusion initiatives to support learning and support in mainstream schools. The split site accommodation is managed effectively and safely.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Linwood is an outstanding school. It succeeds in realising its intention to meet the needs of learners. The school demonstrates a clear vision and an enthusiasm for improvement and innovation. Leaders and managers have made a good start using self-evaluation information to help improve learning opportunities. While inspectors agree with the school's own view of its success, self-evaluation systems could be improved to show their impact on learners' progress and achievement more clearly. Professional development and training opportunities are well established for teachers and teaching assistants. The governing body is extremely supportive and is involved at all levels of school self-evaluation and monitoring.

Teaching is outstanding because very high expectations and the use of a wide range of strategies ensure all learners are included and consequently they achieve extremely well. Teaching assistants effectively support the teacher and learners.

School leavers are very well prepared for the move to further education or employment and all school leavers last year achieved some kind of external accreditation. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that the very youngest children settle well and make good progress.

The care of all learners is outstanding because their personal development is given the highest priority. Behaviour is generally good and managed extremely well. Links with other organisations are firmly established and extremely well used to support learning and personal development. Learners and adults enjoy coming to school to meet their friends, learn and have fun. Many take part in the wide range of extra activities, which they thoroughly enjoy. Parents have very positive views of the school and all it offers their children.

The school clearly demonstrates its enthusiasm and capacity to improve. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has developed effectively since the last inspection and all areas of previous success have been consolidated or improved even further. The school uses all resources extremely well and provides outstanding value for money.

Grade: 1

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

The department has been awarded external accreditation (Leading Aspect award) and inspectors agree that provision is outstanding. Opportunities offered to students encourage confidence and successfully form a bridge between school and adult life. Provision effectively meets the personal development needs of all

students and offers appropriate and worthwhile accreditation that clearly demonstrates their achievement.

Grade: 1**What the school should do to improve further**

The school is already aware of the need to:

- further refine the processes of self-evaluation to ensure there is a clear view of the link between learners' excellent achievement and school developments.

Achievement and standards

Learners achieve very well even though standards reached overall are below those expected for their age. This is because, whatever their ages and abilities, the majority make excellent progress, often exceeding their personal targets. This confirms the school's judgements.

The school is very successful in meeting learners' diverse range of needs and developing their skill and talents. Learners develop high levels of maturity and responsibility because of the school's considerable emphasis on supporting their personal and social skills.

All learners make outstanding progress in their language and literacy and they gain increasing confidence in their everyday communication. The youngest children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, particularly in becoming more independent. Learners in the autistic unit relate to each other well and do well academically.

School leavers in Year 11 achieve very well in national accreditation, given their starting points on entry to the school. There is no significant variation in the performance of boys and girls, minority ethnic groups, or any other group of learners.

Grade: 1**Personal development and wellbeing**

Overall learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. All learners develop an excellent sense of social awareness within the school community and clearly learn what is right and what is wrong and are given appropriate opportunities to take responsibility. Assemblies provide meaningful opportunities to reflect upon topical events, for example, the G8 summit, the

need to think of others less fortunate than themselves and the principle of sharing. Numerous innovative projects and activities engage learners in raising money or resources to improve the lives of others. For example, Post 16 students raise money to support the wellbeing of a young Brazilian boy. Very young pupils learn to understand their feelings and what is right and wrong. All learners are enthusiastic about their school. They behave well, enjoy school and are keen to attend regularly.

Learners feel safe and increasingly understand the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle because they are very well cared for by all adults. They are confident that all the adults care and protect them at all times and that any bullying is quickly resolved. By giving them a voice through the school council and circle time, the school is doing its best to increase learners' confidence and prepare them to participate successfully in groups and communities. Their additional involvement in a wide range of innovative projects with mainstream pupils ensures that they can do this well.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The school has a very accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of its teaching because of its comprehensive monitoring procedures. Ongoing feedback and opportunities for professional development ensure teachers are helped to improve.

Teaching and learning are excellent overall. Learners make excellent progress and show excellent attitudes to their work as a result of very effective teaching. The teachers' very good subject knowledge enhances learning and motivates learners to try their hardest. Behaviour is managed very effectively and excellent relationships support successful learning. Teachers know them extremely well. They use what they know to ensure that learners make very good progress. Assessment is excellent. It is thorough and accurate and guides planning and how learners can improve. Learners receive ongoing praise for good work and achievement and they understand when teachers say 'well done, good learning'. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support learning and their support is greatly appreciated by the learners.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum is excellent because it fully meets the needs of all learners. It is rich and varied and fully meets statutory requirements. The strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development ensures that learners increasingly take some responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. The curriculum offered in the Foundation Stage is good. It ensures that all areas of learning are covered in line with national requirements and is effectively matched to the needs and interests of the learners. Post 16 curriculum provision is excellent. It provides an appropriate mix of academic and personal development, work-related opportunities, community involvement and fully supports their understanding of their economic wellbeing.

There is excellent provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT for all learners and a very strong regard for health and safety. Other subjects also significantly contribute to the overall provision, for example, physical education, music and art and design.

There is an excellent range of activities available after school and outside of lessons and learners said these are really enjoyable and great fun, for example, swimming.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

Learners are cared for exceptionally well. The school very effectively monitors and supports their academic progress and personal development and there is a clear commitment to promoting learners' health and safety. Learners agree that they are very well supported by the school. "I think our teachers are great and I learn a lot. If I am upset about something I know I will be listened to." Effective procedures ensure that learners know who to approach when they have any problems or difficulties. Systems for child protection are excellent and early identification of potentially vulnerable learners results in effective procedures being initiated. Looked-after children are effectively monitored and supported to ensure they make the best personal and academic progress possible. Risk assessments are very carefully attended to. The school works very well with parents and other agencies to ensure that all available resources and support effectively contribute to learners' excellent achievement. Accurate records of learners' progress and achievement are kept and information is effectively used to set challenging targets and to help learners improve their

work. Learners receive excellent guidance and advice from a range of external agencies, for example, a visiting school nurse advising on healthy lifestyles.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders throughout the school are enthusiastic motivators and innovators and successfully provide an excellent and interesting education for learners. The headteacher has a clear, creative vision and very high expectations to ensure that everyone in the school gets the 'very best deal'. The school's leadership effectively seeks information about how well things are going and is very willing to make changes and try new approaches to improve learning. The effective links with regional and national initiatives demonstrate their commitment and high expectations towards learners' progress and achievement. Self-evaluation is well established and comprehensive. It takes into account the views of parents, pupils, governors and a range of external providers. Outcomes are acted upon, although the results do not always make it clear what direct impact developments have on learning and achievement.

Governors meet regularly and are extremely supportive. A number of parent governors regularly visit the school and report back their findings. Governors are involved in all aspects of the self-review process and have a clear view of the school's strengths and development areas. Where appropriate they offer challenge and discussion to information received.

The leadership team is excellent at using a wide range of available initiatives to improve provision and support for learning. For example, the advanced skills teacher (AST) for inclusion and the support teachers in the inclusion team manage a range of projects that include learning opportunities for both mainstream learners and Linwood learners.

The school makes exceptionally good use of its advanced skills teachers and the impact of their activities and project involvement within the school and in mainstream schools is outstanding. The inclusion of all learners is central to the vision of the school and all is done to prevent anything getting in the way of pupil progress and personal development. The leadership and management of Post 16 are excellent. Every opportunity is fully explored to meet individual needs and provide an appropriate programme that will ensure confidence and success when learners transfer to further education or employment.

Vetting procedures for all adults who work with learners are effective. Performance management is well established for teachers and the school has clear plans to offer the same opportunities to the teaching assistants. Resources are used very well and very effectively managed. The impact overall is seen in the excellent progress made by learners, in their sense of security and wellbeing and its deserved, externally validated, accreditation and reputation as a high-achieving school. The leadership and management clearly and effectively demonstrate the school's capacity to improve.

Grade: 1

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16-19
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1
How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?	1	1

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	Delete as appropriate
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	Delete as appropriate
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Delete as appropriate
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Delete as appropriate
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	Yes

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Linwood School
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23 June 2005

Dear Students

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know what we thought about your school after visiting this week. Thank you for making us feel welcome, being friendly and talking to us about your work and your life in the school.

We think your school is **outstanding**. Some of the very best things we noticed included:

- The headteacher and all adults make decisions with your very best interests in mind. They are trying to improve your school all the time.
- You all make excellent progress in your work and personal targets.
- You enjoy learning in lessons and your teachers and teaching assistants are excellent. You love all the extra activities after school.
- Your behaviour is good and you are learning to be safe and have healthy lifestyles.
- Your parents are happy with the school and all it does for you.
- You all get on together and show each other respect. You think of others less fortunate than yourselves and help them.
- The school has improved the provision for computers since the last inspection.

Your school knows that it needs to improve in a couple of areas by:

- Providing training opportunities for your teaching assistants
- Showing more clearly how the work of the school enables you to make progress and achieve.

Yours sincerely

Mike Smith
Lead inspector