

Glebe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108655
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	309758
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Stronach
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Turner
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	Woodburn Drive Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE26 3HW
Telephone number	0191 2008776
Fax number	0191 2008774

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Inspection number	309758

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

About a half of the pupils who come to this school have moderate learning difficulties (MLD). The other half exhibit autism spectrum disorders (ASD). A few have emotional, social or behavioural difficulties. Many have an element of all. The number of pupils with ASD is growing. All pupils have a statement of special educational need, reflecting the significant degree of additional help they need. Pupils are drawn from the whole of north Tyneside and come from a wide range of family backgrounds. Many more than average are entitled to free school meals. Nearly all pupils are English speaking and White British. A very small minority of pupils are looked after by the local authority. Boys outnumber girls by more than two to one, about usual for this type of school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. In the words of a parent, 'It's a gem.' For many years it carried the tag of being a very good school, but excellent leadership, management and governance in recent years has ensured that every opportunity has been taken to bring about continuing improvement. Impending changes, involving a proposed move to a new site, have not been allowed to get in the way of ensuring that each child is given every opportunity to thrive. The school is hugely popular with parents and pupils, and enjoys the full confidence and admiration of the local authority. For the way in which it transforms so many pupils' lives, it gives excellent value for money.

The outstanding promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being is at the heart of the school's work. It is this that pleases parents so much. They love the fact that their children are happy and safe, and are reassured by the excellent care, guidance and support that their children, and indeed themselves, are given. Good teaching ensures that pupils also make good academic progress. Over the past two years, several staffing changes have been necessitated by staff being promoted to higher posts in other schools. The school has wisely appointed energetic, enthusiastic and effective new staff and reorganised the management structure to reflect a strong focus on the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Teachers are adept at promoting pupils' personal development alongside their learning. Often, the nature of pupils' difficulties and/or disabilities means that personal development assumes priority. They learn how to deal with their own very particular difficulties to avoid putting themselves at risk and, as the barriers caused by pupils' social, personal and communication difficulties are dismantled, doors open for their future learning and much brighter futures. Whilst pupils' speaking and listening skills often improve significantly, many continue to have difficulty in progressing with their writing.

One reason pupils like the school so much is because each day is filled with exciting and interesting activities. Wherever possible, pupils learn through doing rather than through merely listening. Many events take learning out of the classroom. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to spend increasing amounts of time in mainstream schools. The school has extensive and outstanding links with many other organisations and with the community. These contribute enormously to the care, well-being and progress of pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children often join the school at a very early stage of learning, with few social or personal skills and with very limited powers of communication. They make rapid progress because they are well taught and exceptionally well nurtured. The Reception classroom provides an exceptionally stimulating environment with excellent resources to help pupils to learn through exploration and discovery indoors and out. Excellent management of the Foundation Stage allows a group of Year 1 pupils to be taught alongside Reception children without either group being disadvantaged.

What the school should do to improve further

- Pursue further ways to improve pupils' writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. The nature of their learning difficulties means that they do not meet national expectations. From a very low starting point, children in the Foundation Stage make remarkably good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. This sets them up well for Key Stage 1, by the end of which most are attaining a standard just below Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Last year, two out of eleven pupils actually reached Level 1 in reading, writing, speaking and listening. From here, pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stage 2. At the end of Year 6 last year, a third of all pupils reached Level 2 in English and science and two thirds did so in mathematics. All other pupils reached Level 1. In science, three pupils achieved Level 3. These are significant achievements for the pupils attending Glebe School.

The school carefully monitors the progress of different groups of pupils and has found nothing to suggest that any group underperforms. Records do show though, that pupils' progress in writing remains weaker than other areas of the curriculum. This is not uncommon amongst pupils with ASD or MLD. A mark of pupils' good achievement is that whilst attainment on entry has fallen in recent years, the outcomes at the end of Year 6 have been maintained.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These stand at the heart of the school and reflect its wonderful ethos and strong culture of celebration and spirituality. It means that pupils' chances of success when they move on to other schools are greatly enhanced. For all pupils, learning how to communicate appropriately and to socialise with one another is of the utmost importance. Parents are thrilled with the results and many report huge changes for the better in their children. Of vital importance is the way pupils become more aware of the impact of their actions on other people. This helps them to keep out of trouble and to avoid attracting unwelcome attention which could put them at risk. Pupils want to come to school because they enjoy all the exciting activities laid on for them and because they do not need to worry about other pupils' behaviour. Any misbehaviour is nearly always linked to difficulties typically faced by pupils with ASD. It can be unsettling, but is exceptionally well managed. Attendance is good and improving. When there is absence, it is most usually for health reasons. Healthy lifestyles are strongly promoted. Pupils whole-heartedly enjoy a wide range of physical activities and frequently join in with pupils from mainstream schools for physical education and games lessons. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community of the school. Their views, for instance, have contributed to the planning of a sensory play space and the purchase of play equipment. Strong links with a school in Africa and involvement with the small local Muslim community have brought valuable additions to pupils' awareness of other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Teachers are particularly adept at balancing the academic achievement of pupils with their personal development. Occasionally the latter takes precedence, but it greatly

enhances pupils' well-being and such development is in line with the school's main aims and the overwhelming wishes of parents. Very little time is wasted in lessons because teachers know exactly what they want pupils to learn and vary tasks well to individual ability. They can do this because excellent assessment procedures give them the information they need to do so. Teaching assistants work with great effectiveness, helping pupils equally to learn and behave. Sometimes, teachers lack the strategies to ensure a swift enough pace of learning in lessons and have yet to ensure that writing skills are as good as they should be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is exceptionally well enriched. The main task for managers has been the challenge of ensuring that the curriculum remains closely matched to the changing needs of the school's population. This has been done extremely effectively, especially in relation to pupils with ASD. Alongside all the subjects of the National Curriculum, a high emphasis is placed on personal and social development. This is evident at most times during the school day, not just in specific lessons. No opportunity is lost to identify learning possibilities in a multitude of activities in and out of the classroom. Visitors have included theatre troupes, musicians and well known sportsmen and women. Multicultural learning is given a high priority, appropriate in a community that is predominantly White British. Pupils are involved in many joint ventures with other schools. Virtually every pupil spends some time in mainstream classrooms over the course of each year.

A valuable extension to the curriculum has been the introduction of the opportunity for pupils to return to school for two weeks during the summer holiday. Invigorating programmes, targeted at pupils who have no other holiday activities, are facilitated by a learning mentor and play therapist.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are excellent. Huge attention is paid to keeping pupils safe, happy and well protected. Health and safety procedures are rigorous. Potential risk in all activities, even visits to local churches, is carefully assessed to prevent avoidable accidents. Care and support are extended to pupils and their families well in advance of their starting school. This often involves other professionals and results in pupils being able to start school with as few worries as possible. An invaluable initiative is the 'Learning Partnership' team. This harnesses the skills of a learning mentor and play therapist, alongside teachers to respond effectively to the changing emotional and learning needs of pupils. Excellent commitment is shown to the needs of looked-after children with the school working extremely closely with other involved parties. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress. They are strongly encouraged to take an active part in school life and their children's education.

Assessment procedures are excellent. They are well established, fully understood by all staff and paint an exceptional picture of pupils' progress. Comprehensive records of achievement are kept. These paint a vivid, celebratory picture of pupils' passage through school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership is inspired. Management and governance are outstanding. A huge collaborative effort contributes to the effectiveness of management. All staff and governors contribute to self-evaluation that takes into full account the views of overwhelmingly happy parents and pupils. In this way, the school builds up a crystal clear picture of what it is doing well and where small improvements can be made to raise standards and better the quality of provision. Over the past two years, the management structure of the school has been very effectively realigned to ensure that all aspects of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda are comprehensively managed so that they pervade the whole working of the school and the desire to make pupils' lives better. The school has received many plaudits from other organisations, cited for instance, as an excellent model by 'Investors In People' and referred to as 'Very much an inclusive school which embraces change and uses it to move forward' by assessors of its successful bid for the Inclusion Quality Mark. Governors are tireless in their work and go to great lengths to find out for themselves what happens in school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Glebe School, North Tyneside, NE26 3HW

Thank you for making me feel so welcome and for talking to me about your school.

I visit lots of schools to see how they are getting on and I am just writing to say how much I enjoyed my visit to your school the other day. After each visit to a school I write a report to let everyone in the world know how good it is.

Glebe School is outstanding, which is a long word meaning that it is one of the best. This will probably not come as a surprise to you.

You are hard working children and you are growing up into delightful young people. You make good progress because you are well taught. Teachers go out of their way to make learning memorable and exciting. That is one of the reasons for all those trips you go on. On top of all this, you are kept safe and happy. A lot of work goes into making a school successful, so hats off to the senior staff and governors who run the school so well.

There is not a lot I can suggest to make your school better but I did notice that quite a lot of you struggle with your writing. I am not alone in noticing this and I am pretty sure your teachers will be giving you even more help with this in future. I have asked them to explore more ways of making this easier for you and I am sure you will try very hard!

Good luck for the future!

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector