

Lancasterian School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 105608 |
| Local Authority | Manchester |
| Inspection number | 336529 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 February 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Marian Thomas |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 2–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 90 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Dave Cavanagh |
| Headteacher | Mr Dave Calvert |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 May 2007 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 50% of inspection time visiting 9 teachers in 10 lessons. They also held meetings with governors, teaching and support staff, the school council and a further group of pupils. They observed the school's work. They looked at curriculum plans, the pupil tracking and assessment scheme, care and welfare documentation and 33 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by all groups of pupils
- the attendance of different groups of pupils
- the health, safety and welfare documents produced by school.

Information about the school

This school makes provision for 90 students with physical disabilities. A significant proportion of students have additional complex speech and language, medical and cognitive difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes and a Nursery. The Nursery has provision for 4 children from the local community as well as 12 children with physical difficulties. As part of the Barrier Free Programme, the school supports 35 pupils with physical disabilities who are fully included in 12 primary schools. Advice and support is also offered to primary and secondary schools and designated Sure Start centres within the local authority.

The proportion of students at Lancasterian who are eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than the national average. The number of students from minority ethnic families and asylum seeker families is high; a higher than average proportion speak English as an additional language. The school encompasses Manchester's provision for travel training. It also runs an Independent Development Service unit, which provides training on independent living for a small group of students.

Lancasterian has recently achieved specialist school status for communication and interaction.

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

Lancasterian is an outstanding school which well deserves its excellent reputation with parents and the community. Parents' and carers' views are reflected well in the comment: Lancasterian School has provided my child with a sound foundation in which a bright and exciting future has been embedded'.

The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and deliver the quality of provision necessary for them to do so. Overall, self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is highly rigorous and the findings are acted upon to very good effect. The school is excellent at supporting pupils' unique physical needs and, as a result, barriers to learning are minimised. Since the last inspection, the school has achieved specialist school status, demonstrating through this process a strong determination to improve further.

Pupils in the main school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress in their personal development and grow in confidence as they move through school. This is as a result of excellent care, guidance and support. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Most are clear about how to stay healthy. Their behaviour is outstanding and they feel very safe. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Good teaching is based on thorough and reliable assessment of pupils' learning needs. Overall, progress is very good. Most groups of pupils, such as those with severe learning difficulties and pupils who are looked after by the local authority, make excellent progress. However, the progress of a very small group of pupils with autistic spectrum is not quite as strong. This is because the school struggles to meet their additional and complex needs within the classroom setting. School leaders are aware of this and have made every effort to address the issue.

A detailed assessment system has been introduced since the last inspection, with excellent analysis of data. This ensures that monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is very effective. As a result, teachers are able to plan learning and set targets which inspire ambition and maximise pupils' progress. Behaviour is managed very effectively and teaching assistants provide excellent support in nearly all lessons. The outstanding curriculum has continued to improve since the last inspection, with new partnership initiatives to enrich learning. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding and the welfare of learners is given the highest priority. However, because of the vulnerability and complex medical needs of many pupils, overall attendance is only satisfactory.

Senior managers are highly effective in moving the school forward and have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development as a result of

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excellent self-evaluation. The committed and supportive governing body visits school regularly and is effective in monitoring its work and holding senior leaders to account. Through its work with schools in India and Ukraine, the school has focused well on ensuring pupils have a clear understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society. All staff know pupils exceptionally well and are very sensitive to the circumstances in their lives which make them vulnerable. The school has excellent capacity for sustained further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder:
 - by ensuring the learning environment meets their needs
 - by ensuring staff receive sufficient training to deliver effective teaching strategies to meet the needs of this group of pupils

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils arriving at the school settle very quickly because of the friendly and welcoming atmosphere. This allows staff to assess their needs and provide individual learning programmes in conjunction with health care professionals. This assessment continues to take place, for example during lessons, and coupled with the fast pace of learning in most lessons, helps pupils to work consistently and achieve well, exceptionally so in many cases. This was seen clearly in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson. Five of the nine students attending the lesson used communication aids for speech. Staff moved skilfully around the room supporting students, ensuring they continually participated in the lesson. In the plenary session all reported their findings confidently, ensuring that everyone's voice was included. Staff set inspirational targets for pupils in all key stages. This, coupled with the removal of barriers to learning, ensures that most pupils across the key stages make good and often outstanding progress.

Secondary age students engage well with learning because staff are particularly good at building up their self-esteem. This, coupled with the wide range of academic and vocational courses offered, ensures that pupils leave with many qualifications and accreditations. Last year's school leavers successfully passed entry level exams in art, English and mathematics and received Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards in life skills and in either the Bronze Award or the Transition challenge.

All pupils who attend the school have a physical disability. Many also have an associated learning difficulty. As a result, attainment for the majority of students is well below national expectations. All pupils who attend the school are identified as having additional needs. These are well supported and as a consequence most groups make similar progress. However, pupils with autistic spectrum disorder make less good progress. This is because the learning environment does not always meet the needs of this small group.

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Pupils enjoy school immensely. They feel very safe because they know staff are supportive and help them at all times illustrated by one pupil who commented: 'Staff really care here and make me feel I'm special'. Pupils eat healthy meals together throughout the day when staff join them in family groups. This, coupled with the popular sports options offered, ensures pupils have an understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community both in and outside school by listening to and appreciating the needs of others. For example, pupils in Key Stage 4 organise and run a community café, the proceeds from which go to local as well as global charities. Pupils' overall good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in the way in which they react to each other and take care of the environment.

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 | 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 | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

Information and communication technology (ICT) is used exceptionally well in lessons to

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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support learning and involve pupils in making choices. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) aids are used very well to support pupils' speech impairments and teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure pupils' complex needs are met. For example, AAC aids are used very well to support many pupils' speech both in lessons and during social times. Learning rarely slows even when pupils' physical needs are being addressed. For example, staff ensure that pupils' personal care is undertaken at break in order to maximise learning time.

Teachers use assessment information well to inform pupils of their targets. As a result, pupils' progress is consistent across the curriculum. Teachers plan lessons conscientiously. Good attention is given to ensuring work is modified to meet the different needs of pupils within the class.

The curriculum is very well organised and is imaginatively enhanced by many visits and activities away from the classroom. For example, younger children enjoyed a trip to a donkey sanctuary. This was then used as a focus for writing, as well as linking well with an animal care project. Residential visits to a variety of locations promote pupils' independent skills exceptionally well. A wide range of vocational courses are offered including certificates in food and hygiene for all pupils, as well as ASDAN courses in team building and life skills. These contribute well to students' development and future economic well-being.

As a result of outstanding care, guidance and support, pupils feel there is always someone who will listen and help. One pupil expressed this well when he said: 'I know even when I feel cross someone will care'. A careful and thorough assessment is undertaken when pupils arrive at the school, which is then used to target support effectively. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and this is helped by the excellent links with outside agencies. However the attendance of an extremely small number of pupils remains a problem and the school recognises the need to address this further in partnership with outside agencies.

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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The reflective, visionary and determined leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders is instrumental in moving the school forward and in ensuring many outstanding outcomes for pupils. This, coupled with effective delegation of roles and responsibilities throughout the school drives improvement further. The school's governing body has

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implemented strong procedures to ensure the health and well-being of all pupils. Members offer valuable support to the school and are starting to offer challenge to senior leaders. Excellent policies and procedures ensure all government safeguarding requirements are met and that practice is of an exceptional standard. Leaders and managers have ensured that the school is a highly inclusive community. Equality of opportunity and the tackling of discrimination within school is good. The school's successful and innovative links with a special school in India give pupils an excellent opportunity to develop views and understanding of the diversity of the global community. This, coupled with direct links to schools in Chernobyl, contributes to pupils' excellent understanding of community cohesion.

The school makes great efforts to engage all parents and carers. The work of school staff ensures they are kept very well informed about their child's successes. Daily diary links with home are securely in place and as a result parents value the work of the school highly. Excellent partnerships with a wide variety of agencies contribute significantly to pupils' well-being and progress. The school ensures outstanding outcomes for pupils, many of whom have extreme and significant needs. It does this on a tightly controlled budget and 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

Lancasterian staff establish excellent links with the parents of very young children before they start school. The school provides interpreters to ensure effective communication for children who speak English as an additional language. As a result, all

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children get off to an excellent start. They settle into their routines quickly because of the effective partnerships with parents and the high quality guidance and support for their personal and social development. They clearly feel very safe and secure in the setting. Partnerships with the on-site children's therapy team ensure that children are quickly assessed and provided with suitable communication aids. This effectively supports children's communication and their personal and social development. A wide range of highly relevant and enjoyable learning experiences in a stimulating indoor environment ensure pupils' progress is excellent. Outdoor learning opportunities are more limited because of the nature of the pupils' physical and medical needs. Despite this, staff are highly committed to ensuring pupils have opportunities to experience outdoor play and outdoor provision mirrors indoor learning experience. As a result of the excellent teaching, and highly effective support from staff, children make outstanding progress. Tasks are exceptionally well adapted to children's ages and abilities because staff use assessment information effectively to plan learning experiences. Pupils' progress is charted well through excellent 'learning journeys' which are shared with parents. Planning of activities is effective and informed by assessment of pupils' progress. Evaluation is excellent and identifies clearly what the setting needs to do to improve.

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 |

Views of parents and carers

Thirty three parents and carers replied to the inspection questionnaire. The vast majority of parents and carers were exceptionally pleased with the provision that Lancasterian School makes for their children. They feel that their children enjoy coming to school and that the school keeps them safe. A large majority consider that the school keeps them well informed and meets the needs of their children well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lancasterian 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 29 | 88 | 4 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 28 | 85 | 5 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 25 | 76 | 8 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 21 | 64 | 10 | 30 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 28 | 85 | 5 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 25 | 76 | 5 | 15 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 20 | 61 | 12 | 36 | 1 | 3 | 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) | 23 | 70 | 8 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 24 | 73 | 7 | 21 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 27 | 82 | 4 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 23 | 70 | 7 | 21 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 25 | 76 | 8 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 25 | 76 | 8 | 24 | 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 pupils' 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.



26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lancasterian School, Manchester M20 2XA

Thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we visited you recently. We really enjoyed meeting you all in your classrooms, at lunch and at break time. We were particularly impressed by how well you behaved during our visit and how keen you were to talk to us about your school.

We feel that all of you are working very hard and are enjoying your time at school immensely. You told us how well you get on with each other and how you felt it was the best school ever. We think you are right and that Lancasterian is an outstanding school. Your teachers work exceptionally hard to ensure you have as many choices as possible so that you leave with as many qualifications as possible. You also told us that staff are brilliant at supporting you and really care. We agree and feel they work very hard to ensure you are very well cared for and guided to make the right choices.

Because your school is so exceptionally good, we have only asked your teachers to do just one thing: to help pupils with autism to make as much progress as everyone else.

We are sure that you will all do well in the future because you work so hard.

We also hope that you continue to care for the environment and continue to be such good eco-warriors!

Yours sincerely

Marian Thomas

Lead Inspector

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