



Sidestrand Hall School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121254
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280962
Inspection dates 27 March 2006 to 28 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Ian Naylor LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Cromer Road
School category	Community special		NR27 0NH
Age range of pupils	8 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01263 578144
Number on roll	95	Fax number	01263 579287
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Mike Lovatt
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2004	Headteacher	Mrs. Sarah Fee

Age group 8 to 16	Inspection dates 27 March 2006 - 28 March 2006	Inspection number 280962
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a school for pupils aged 8 to 16 with moderate to severe learning needs, autism, and associated speech and communication needs. Many pupils also have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are admitted from a wide area. They are from a predominantly White British heritage. All have statements of special educational needs which show below average levels of attainment. Residential provision is provided for 17 pupils, with weekly flexible boarding arrangements in agreement with parents. The school is part of a local authority reorganisation consultation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective, thriving and caring school community. Inspectors agree Sidestrand provides a good standard of education and no longer has serious weaknesses. This closely concurs with the school's own self-evaluation. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud of their success. Teaching is good, with careful attention to the management of behaviour. This promotes effective learning and consequently pupils' achievement is good. The curriculum is effective and provides a wide range of relevant and interesting learning opportunities. Pupils are therefore engaged and challenged to improve in their skills. Pupils make good progress in their communication, social and life skills and are well prepared for adult life by the time they leave school. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in managing behaviour and in particular those pupils with very challenging behaviour. However, there are still a number of exclusions due to unacceptable behaviour and the school is working hard to minimise these. Measures have been taken to improve attendance and ensure punctuality for lessons. As a result, attendance and punctuality are now satisfactory. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has worked successfully to create a senior management team with clearly delegated responsibilities. She liaises closely with governors on school improvement issues and staff recruitment. As a result staffing is now more stable and there is good team work. This helps to provide a good standard of care and support to pupils both in lessons and in the residence. The school has a good school improvement plan that is the product of wide consultation and which gives a clear direction to actions to improve achievement and provision. This plan rightly highlights the need to improve the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum and the need to build on the assessment strategy so that it provides better information to teachers and helps to set pupils' targets. The school demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

Boarding provision is good and meets or exceeds the National Minimum Standards. This has a positive impact upon pupils' personal development in particular. The school provides a high standard of care for the pupils who board, as identified during the most recent Commission for Care Standards Inspection (CSCI). The school is already working to meet the comparatively few recommendations made. School and residential staff work in partnership and there is now more involvement of care staff during the school day. Regular opportunities for discussion about a pupils' ongoing development are taken and residential staff are involved in supporting Year 11 pupils toward reaching their award for improving life skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the number of exclusions further by continuing to implement the school's support systems for improving pupils' behaviour. - Increase the use of ICT across the

curriculum to support progress in the subjects. - Make better and more consistent use of the analysis of school data on pupil performance, to inform the next steps in teaching and to set targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils join the school with lower than national average levels of ability because of their learning or behavioural needs. By the time they leave school they have made good progress across a range of subjects, and especially in speaking, listening and social skills. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science. In English, pupils' achievements have improved so that they are now satisfactory overall. Although some pupils struggle to meet their projected school performance targets in Years 4 to 9 for English, in mathematics and science they are more successful. By the time they reach Year 11 they are successful in meeting challenging school targets in nationally accredited courses. Most pupils in Year 11 gain academic qualifications by the time they leave the school. These include GCSE grades in both mathematics and science, Entry Level grades in English, science, mathematics and land-based vocational studies. All pupils in Year 11 achieved the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Silver Award, which highlights progress in their literacy, numeracy, social and life skills. Pupils' profiles of achievement also show that they make good progress in work experience and work related skills. They also achieve success in their social and independence skills and in their relationships with adults. The fact that pupils achieve these successes is in stark contrast to the low levels of achievement with which they arrived at the school. There is very good achievement in physical education with pupils competing successfully against other similar schools in a range of events such as swimming, soccer and cross-country running. There is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls. Looked after pupils, and those with challenging behaviour, make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. By the time they leave school pupils have improved in self-confidence and developed their skills of self-reliance and independence. The majority work hard in lessons, behave well and take a pride in what they achieve. Pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school and enjoy the activities provided. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. A small number of pupils with challenging behaviours sometimes cause problems for themselves and others and consequently the rate of temporary exclusions is still higher than might be expected. Pupils find the school's system of credits and rewards is consistent in recognising their good behaviour, performance and gives them encouragement. Attendance is steadily improving and is satisfactory; punctuality for lessons is good. Pupils have a voice through the school council and their views are taken into account. For example, pupils' views have influenced the school's strategy on rewards. Pupils are very aware of the need to stay healthy. This is shown by the enthusiastic take-up and responses to physical education lessons and

an after school club with a variety of activities including sporting, leisure and cookery. They learn about healthy menus in food technology and they take pride in growing organic vegetables in their environmental studies. They know about keeping safe effectively. For example, pupils learn about safe sex, in sex education lessons in Year 11. Social and moral development is good. Relationships are good and pupils show consideration to one another and several excellent examples were seen. They understand right and wrong and know the school rules. They contribute successfully to the school and wider community in events such as raising money for charity and the school Christmas production. An excellent feature is pupil involvement in the decision making and financial planning for two local business initiatives aimed at promoting and protecting the local environment. Pupils are prepared well for their future working life. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. There are many examples of effective teaching which keeps pupils focused on learning and enables them to make good progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Lessons are well planned and organised and most teachers expect a lot from their pupils and challenge them well. The pace of lessons is good with effective questioning. In the few instances where teaching is less effective, opportunities to deal with pupils' misunderstandings and to build on what they know are missed. Teachers know pupils' special educational needs well, and manage them effectively in most lessons. Teaching assistants provide good support in the practical part of the lesson, although where the whole class is taught together they do not always have a clear role in supporting pupils' learning. Introductions are clear although what pupils are to learn is not always shared with them. A good range of resources is used to aid learning. However, little use of ICT is made. A good feature is where teachers use a wide range of practical ways to promote pupils' understanding. For instance, in a geography lesson on tourism in Year 7, role play was used well. Opportunities for pupils to show and self-assess what they have learned are sometimes missed. Assessment is satisfactory. English, mathematics and science, have well established though different systems. Assessment systems are developing in the other subjects and this has been a focus in this year's school improvement plan. The school recognises that information gained from assessments needs to be used to plan the next steps for pupils' learning, to set whole school targets and to confirm the levels assigned to pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. It meets pupils' needs well and takes full account of the requirements of the National Curriculum. It also is planned to help meet the local need in terms of the types of work or activities pupils may find themselves involved

with when they have left school. There is a good focus on literacy and numeracy as well as modern foreign languages. While ICT is used effectively in areas such as horticulture and environmental science for which the school has won numerous awards, it is not used sufficiently in other subjects. Personal development is developed well and pupils gain an understanding of what it is to be a citizen through a wide variety of activities. The work of outside agencies considerably enhances the curriculum. Pupils also benefit from a range of visits and visitors. Strong links within the community through leisure and sporting facilities considerably support pupils' healthy lifestyles and personal development. However, pupils have few opportunities to learn in a mainstream school or college. Overall, activities to enrich the curriculum are good, especially the two residential opportunities pupils have each year. A reasonable range of accredited courses is offered to pupils. All pupils have full access to the curriculum through careful support. A good programme of work related learning and work experience is in place. The school recognises it needs to provide a wider range of vocational opportunities in Key Stage 4.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for pupils well. Staff have a good knowledge of pupils' personal needs and development. Effective, well structured support systems to improve pupils' behaviour are working well and as a consequence, exclusions have reduced. However, there is still some way to go to reduce these to a minimum. The information the school has on its pupils' academic progress has improved since the last inspection. However, information is not always charted in a way to make it easy to examine trends and patterns in progress. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure pupil safety. Secure systems are in place for first aid, health and safety and the protection of pupils, although documentation to support these areas is not up to date or does not accurately identify the staff with the key roles. Annual review and individual education plan processes are thorough. Older pupils and students receive good guidance about their course and career choices, especially through close links with the Connexions Service

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the school has been strengthened by the appointment of two assistant headteachers and by the delegation to them of specific areas of management responsibility. This has proved effective in harnessing the skills and experience of the staff team and giving encouragement to new members of staff. The headteacher provides good leadership and has overseen significant improvements to provision since the last inspection. There is a wider accountability for the quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum. The school improvement plan identifies actions necessary to improve the quality of provision and further raising standards of attainment. School systems for self-evaluation are satisfactory. There is a clear understanding of what needs to be done next to secure

improvements but assessment could be used better to evaluate patterns and trends in pupils' progress and to set targets. Subject leadership is satisfactory, but leaders need to be further enabled to monitor the quality of teaching and provision so that they can have a greater impact upon subject improvements. Parental views are sought on range of issues and they are kept well informed. Governors are closely involved with checking the quality of the curriculum and teaching and fulfil all their legal obligations, such as those for health, safety and staff recruitment. A very experienced and knowledgeable chair of governors works closely to support the leadership. This has resulted in a more stable staffing situation which in turn has helped to promote better quality in teaching and in particular the management of pupil behaviour. The school is in a good position to make future improvements.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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	
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	
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	
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may recall that Mr Derby and I visited your school before the Easter holiday. We were pleased to be in your school and found you to be very friendly and helpful. I would like to share with you the things that we found out during our visit. You say you like coming to the school and that there are interesting activities for you to do that you particularly enjoy, such as sport and gardening. You feel that poor behaviour is now less of a problem in school than it was last year. You know an adult you can turn to if you are worried about being bullied. We think that your teachers are doing a good job and work hard to make sure that all lessons help you to make good progress. Teaching assistants and care staff also give you lots of help. We were particularly impressed by the way in which you help one another in school and also people in the local area. You know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe, and how to take good care of the environment. We were also very pleased that so many of the older pupils amongst you work hard to achieve well in examinations and courses. This will help you a lot when you leave school. It is important for you to work hard and behave well at all times. A few of you could try even harder to make sure that your behaviour is always acceptable. This would ensure that teachers do not need to say you have to stay at home until you learn how to behave properly and safely towards yourself and others in school. We think that you need to use computers more to help you in lessons. Teachers should get you to think about how well you have done at the end of each lesson and how you could help yourself to improve even more. They could check how you are doing more carefully and then be able to tell you what to do next to make your progress in lessons even better.