



# Aylands School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 102068  
**Local Authority** Enfield  
**Inspection number** 286265  
**Inspection date** 14 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Margaret Goodchild

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Keswick Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		Enfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-16		EN3 6NY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01992761229
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	34	<b>Fax number</b>	01992767032
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Vic Sullivan
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Finlay Douglas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All the pupils have a history of underachievement in their previous schools and Aylands has begun to take pupils who are categorised as being particularly 'hard to place'. Of the 34 pupils, 33 are boys. A high percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals and many come from deprived backgrounds. Attainment on entry is below average overall and about a third of pupils join the school with well below average standards.

## **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 that is held in high esteem by parents and is equally popular with its pupils. It takes pupils with behavioural difficulties and a history of educational failure and turns them into thoughtful young people, capable of making a meaningful contribution to society.

The school has sustained and built upon the many strengths identified at the last inspection because leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's exceptionally high expectations are communicated in a way that engenders confidence in staff, pupils and parents alike. Senior managers are committed to making the school as good as it can possibly be and pay tremendous attention to detail in translating their shared vision into reality. Teaching is outstanding and learning opportunities are carefully matched to pupils' individual needs.

Exceptionally effective systems for managing pupils' behaviour are underpinned by an effort to do everything possible to counteract any negative influences that might affect an individual's well-being. Staff support the pupils, and sometimes also their families, in all sorts of ways that parents describe as 'beyond the call of duty'.

Pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment where no time is wasted, and there is a shared sense between teachers and pupils that learning has a real purpose. As a result, standards are broadly average and achievement is outstanding. Parents are delighted with the progress their children have made: one said, 'My child learnt more in two months at this school than he did in three years in mainstream'. Pupils meet with a high level of success in examinations in Year 11 and all go on either to further education or employment. Their readiness to enter the world as mature and responsive young people is evident from employers' comments following their work experience placements: 'An absolute credit to the school, a lovely guy, really sociable, we love him'; 'He's willing, well mannered .... We would take him back again anytime'; 'One of the best half dozen students we've ever had. I wish they could all be like him.'

### What the school should do to improve further

The inspection identified no key issues: the school should continue what it is already doing to refine aspects of its practice in order to raise achievement even further.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

The school has sustained an outstanding level of achievement over a number of years. Standards are broadly average and pupils in Year 11 gain an average of eight GCSE passes at grades A\* to G; in 2006, two pupils gained nine passes. These results are outstanding for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Indeed, the progress pupils make at Key Stage 2 and from the beginning of Key Stage 3 to the end of Key Stage 4 places Aylands in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

Pupils are making exceptionally good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. Older pupils produce lengthy pieces of creative writing and pupils develop important problem-solving skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to very good effect to support pupils' learning in a number of subjects, as well as in the presentation of their work. Pupils' work is of high quality in art, where they have the opportunity to experience a range of techniques and media, as well as learning about the work of other artists. At the time of the last inspection, pupils made insufficient progress in design and technology: they now produce high quality final artefacts.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. They enter the school with entrenched negative attitudes, challenging behaviour and a reluctance to engage with education but their outlook is quickly turned around. They accept the school rules, to which they contribute, and value the reward system. Behaviour is good, reflecting the outstanding progress pupils have made in controlling and understanding their own response to situations.

Most pupils are reluctant to miss any time from school because they find learning so enjoyable and respond enthusiastically to the activities provided. One spoke proudly about the 'five or six times' he has been on school trips to the Royal Opera House and there is a high take-up for instrumental music lessons provided by peripatetic teachers. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 choose to arrive early some mornings and readily give up some of their lunchtime to fit in a GCSE in humanities. Pupils take regular exercise, have an understanding of healthy living and know how to stay safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and pupils show consideration for one another, including for those much younger than themselves. They say that bullying is rare. As one pupil put it, 'Everyone gets along with everyone else'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are active in fundraising and in contributing their ideas to the school council. As they move through the school, they acquire a range of skills and personal qualities that stand them in exceptionally good stead for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers have high expectations in the work that they set and the way they expect pupils to behave. The speed with which they implement the school's behaviour management procedures at the first hint of inattention ensures that pupils remain on task and nearly always work to their capacity. Teachers plan their lessons well and in many instances exceptionally so. They work very effectively with their teaching assistants, who contribute significantly to pupils'

learning. Teachers use probing questioning to ensure that pupils understand new concepts and to engage them as active learners. Pupils are confident to express their ideas in the knowledge that their views will be respected. Most but not all teachers evaluate their lessons thoroughly: the school is already working to ensure that all evaluations are of equal quality.

The daily home-school diary makes clear to parents how well their children are progressing and the school does all it can to make parents aware of how to help their children at home. Homework extends pupils' learning effectively and the school provides a club to support those pupils who need a quiet place to complete the work. Thorough systems are in place for identifying pupils' learning needs and the school sets challenging individual targets.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is broad and matched exceptionally well to pupils' needs and interests. Pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3 study all the National Curriculum subjects and most at Key Stage 4 are entered for at least nine GCSEs. The school is thoroughly researching courses available for older pupils in its effort to meet every aspect of each pupil's needs. Through its links with local colleges and businesses, it already provides individual packages for those who require a more vocational or work-based approach. Learning is enriched by an outstanding range of visits and pupils take part in regular dramatic performances. The school promotes and celebrates cultural diversity and fosters in pupils an ability to reflect on their behaviour and experiences. Throughout the school, emphasis on literacy and numeracy is carefully balanced with opportunities to take part in practical activities. This helps to explain the high level of motivation amongst the pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance for its pupils. One of the main reasons pupils do so well personally and academically is that they know the staff care about them. As one pupil said, 'The staff are kind to us - when we're down, they pull us back up'. Kindness is combined with firmness, however, and the school has highly effective systems for managing pupils' behaviour. Staff maintain a high level of supervision at all times and the 'front room' provides time out, advice and an opportunity for personal reflection for those struggling in a lesson. The school works continuously to achieve the highest possible attendance rate, and teachers collaborate closely with other agencies and with parents. Pupils receive outstanding personal and academic guidance, and the school does all it can to ensure that they have a positive experience when they leave. Learning targets are communicated clearly to pupils and parents, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. The school meets all child protection and health and safety requirements.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The school has sustained and built on high quality provision since the last inspection and has resolved fully the issues identified at that time so that what were weaknesses are now strengths. It gives exceptionally good value for money.

There are a number of key features to the outstanding leadership and management. An enlarged senior leadership team matches the skills of individual managers with their particular roles and responsibilities. Performance data is thoroughly analysed to identify how well pupils are doing and to highlight where they need additional help to accelerate their learning. Monitoring is rigorous and the findings carefully considered to arrive at a school improvement plan with very specific targets. Staffing is stable and professional development opportunities are exceptionally good. The chair of governors knows the school thoroughly: he and a small number of other governors bring valuable skills to the governing body and parents are becoming increasingly involved as governors. Best practice is readily shared and senior staff are quick to provide support wherever a helping hand is needed.

The school is modest and self-critical because it is always striving to improve. Teamwork amongst the staff is strong, morale is very high and parents, rightly, recognise that teachers love their jobs. The school has begun to reach out to other schools to provide them with support and has a clear vision for extending its influence. Restructuring of the senior management team has strengthened the school's capacity to move forward on a number of fronts at once: it has an exceptionally good capacity to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	2
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**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and found it inspiring. I am writing now to let you know what I found out about the school.

You are very lucky to go to such an outstanding school. It gives you a wonderful chance to sort out your behaviour and turn your life around. The headteacher has really high expectations and he is very good at communicating these to you as well as to the staff. This helps you to feel confident because you know all sorts of things that felt out of reach at one time are actually possible.

Teaching is outstanding and the best thing of all is the shared sense between you and the teachers that learning has a real purpose. You are working at standards that are broadly average and your achievement is outstanding. I was very impressed by the number of GCSEs those of you in Year 11 get and to read the comments from employers following your work experience placements - they show just how effective the school is and how much you grasp the opportunities it provides.

Aylands keeps getting better and better because senior managers and the staff are already doing all they can to improve the school. I couldn't find anything else that they need to do.

You can help them by working as hard as you can, by continuing to enjoy your time at Aylands and by believing in your own ability to do anything you set your mind to.

Yours sincerely

M Goodchild

Lead inspector