



The Eresby School, Spilsby

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120760
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291848
Inspection date 26 September 2006
Reporting inspector Dr. Trevor Watts

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Eresby Avenue
School category	Community		Spilsby
Age range of pupils	3-18		Lincolnshire PE23 5HU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01790 752441
Number on roll (school)	39	Fax number	01790 754223
Number on roll (6th form)	0		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Father.Peter Coates
		Headteacher	Ms. Jackie McPherson
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Eresby School is a very small rural special school with pupils aged from two to nineteen years of age. All pupils are from White British backgrounds and have statements of special educational needs, half of them for severe learning difficulties. Most other pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. A small but growing number have autism, with associated behavioural difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Eresby School has seen enormous changes for the better in the four years since the previous inspection, and since the arrival of the present headteacher shortly afterwards. From being a satisfactory school, it has become a good school with some outstanding characteristics. Developments centre on much improved achievements by pupils from the Foundation Stage to the Post-16 unit. Pupils' progress has improved, resulting in good achievement throughout the school. This is because the teaching is better than before, and more realistic targets are set for pupils to be working towards. Clearly, in view of their considerable learning difficulties and disabilities, pupils do not reach the same standards expected of mainstream pupils of their age. However, whether pupils have severe learning difficulties, or profound and multiple ones, they make good progress in each stage of the school. The small, but increasing, number of pupils with autism (ASD) are very well integrated into classes, and they also make good progress. A need to review the effectiveness of various communication methods that are used around school has been identified, so that standards of communication, which are not sufficiently developed, are improved. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. As well as progressing well in their academic, living and employment skills, pupils develop extremely well in their personal lives. Their spiritual and cultural development is outstanding, with examples such as climbing a hill to see a wonderful view from the top, or a trip to Virginia, USA, in the very near future. Socially and morally, pupils also develop extremely well. Although some pupils do not know the meaning of right and wrong, they get on very well together and with staff. Pupils are safe and well-cared for; they know they can turn to any member of staff if they need help of any kind. Behaviour is very good, and pupils enjoy their lessons and other activities very much. One pupil said, 'School's nice and small so everybody knows everybody else really well.' Pupils learn how to eat healthily and get plenty of exercise. They learn how to be safe, whether in a kitchen cooking for themselves, or on the roads finding their way to a work experience placement. They join in with many community events, both within the school and further afield, such as raising money for the air ambulance, and for those suffering from cancer. Pupils make good progress because teachers are good at their jobs, and so are classroom support staff. Staff have good relationships with pupils, and they run lessons that are generally pitched at the right level of difficulty to encourage pupils to try hard. Teachers know their pupils very well, and assess their progress accurately. They use the information very well in planning future lessons and the long-term direction each subject will take. The curriculum has come on in leaps and bounds recently, with, for instance, new courses for the over 14 year-olds that are accredited by external boards. Opportunities for learning employment skills are outstanding. The improvements and present effectiveness of the school are down to the clear focus provided by an outstanding headteacher, and the drive with which she has guided new staff, set them goals, and enabled them to achieve those goals. Although some teachers lack experience, and some lack broad subject knowledge, they all pull together as a strong team. They have the academic and personal welfare of pupils at heart, and are developing their skills well through additional training in school and at other places. Because pupils with

ASD are fairly new to the school, and their numbers are predicted to continue to rise, the school recognised a need to ensure that staff know how best to teach them in ways that are appropriate to their particular needs and difficulties. The headteacher is already well qualified in this area, and some staff, but not all, have undertaken training. Teachers all now have a management responsibility for more than one area of the curriculum, and perhaps for an aspect of the school, such as the Post-16 unit. They are filling these new roles well. The assistant headteacher, particularly, is very capable in her role. The school's governors are good at helping to guide the school's budget and long term planning. They support the headteacher's initiatives well, and are now taking closer interest in a subject each. The school's evaluation of itself is good and clear. Where minor differences between the school's and the inspection judgements occurred, the school was well able to explain and discuss the reasoning behind them. Current priorities for development are good ones, continuing well from what has already been put into place. The school intends to raise pupils' standards of communication, initially by looking at how valuable some of the present communication aids really are. These include, for example, electronic aids, signing, symbols and picture cards. The intention is to further develop pupils' use of the most effective ones, and to improve their speaking (and other communication) and listening skills. As one governor said of all the developments so far, 'The changes have been amazing, but we haven't yet reached the end.' In view of the recent track record, the headteacher's drive and vision, the willing teamwork of all staff, and the increasingly involved support of the governors, the school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is a separate classroom for a group of eight students who have a good curriculum based on learning to live independently and to prepare for their future lives. They have good experiences of work in many different settings, such as a nursery, nursing home and garden centre. Several students attend a college one day each week. Students make good progress and achieve well. Their accommodation is newly reorganised, and does not yet reflect the more adult nature of the students, their needs, and how they see themselves. The students do not feel that their provision is very much different and distinct from that of other pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Look for further ways to develop pupils' communication skills. - Ensure that plans for staff training fully reflect changes in the pupil population, such as increasing numbers of pupils with autism. - Develop the Post-16 unit to have a more distinctive and 'adult' feel and appearance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

All pupils achieve well and develop good skills across a wide range of subjects that are especially relevant to their needs and circumstances because they are very well included in all aspects of the curriculum. Children in the Foundation Stage are well taught alongside slightly older pupils in Years 1 and 2. They make good progress and benefit from clear individual planning within the Early Years curriculum, from good support for their level of need, and from their interactions with other pupils. Their achievements in all of the areas of learning are good. Learning proceeds well as pupils grow through the school, culminating in very good experiences of work and college placements and the development of basic living and independence skills in Years 10 and 11, and as pupils become students in the Post-16 unit. In their computing, mathematical and communication skills, pupils make good progress and achieve well. The ways in which communication skills are encouraged are to be reviewed as part of a drive to further raise standards in this most important area.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development owes much to the dedication of staff. Teachers and classroom support staff show a great willingness to 'go the extra mile' in helping and supporting all pupils. The school has done a great deal to encourage pupils' awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, with additional sports such as archery, sailing, kayaking and carriage-riding. They also provide nourishing and healthy hot meals, and encourage pupils to bring their own equally healthy lunches. The new curriculum for personal and social education includes very good coverage of sex, relationships and citizenship education, with good help from visiting staff. Pupils have very good opportunities to take responsibility, from being class monitors, to being on the new school council, and having a say in buying playground equipment and deciding on the school uniform. Some older pupils have achieved the much-valued Junior Sports Leaders Awards. Pupils' attendance is no better than satisfactory due to many taking time off because of illness, but others take holidays in term time, or remain at home for other reasons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teachers are well organised in their class activities and their assessment of pupils' progress is thorough and accurate. Activities are structured well, and have clear targets for what pupils are expected to learn. Sometimes a 'cutting and sticking' activity can lessen the impact of a sparkling introduction to, say, an English lesson, although good handling and coordination skills are encouraged well in these activities. The more able pupils are becoming involved in recording their own progress and setting their own targets. Teachers use assessment information very well in planning future lessons and the long-term direction each subject will take. Behaviour is managed very effectively, and teachers are improving their techniques for developing communication with, and by, all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum has developed very well since the previous inspection, and now makes clear and full reference to the National Curriculum. There is good regard for the expected curriculum for the youngest children, and for students in the Post-16 unit. Provision for improving pupils' communication skills is at an early stage of development. The school already provides several nationally accredited courses for older pupils, and intends to expand the range when possible. Especially good opportunities to develop very relevant skills in independent living, employment, literacy, mathematics and computing are provided for older pupils and students in the Post-16 unit. There is also a very good range of additional activities, such as trips to the theatre and residential visits to the Lake District. The curriculum links well with the college where many pupils go to next. Their Entry Level courses merge directly with the next level at Boston College. Post-16 students have one day a week at the college learning food preparation and hygiene, and independence and living skills, as well as benefiting from social mixing and communication with other students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school has secure systems for ensuring that pupils are safe and well looked after. Pupils are guided well in their academic and personal development through the very good assessment procedures that the school maintains. Pupils and parents are involved in setting some targets, but there is scope to expand this involvement further. The school does what is necessary to ensure that pupils receive the support they need in

order to meet their targets. However, the lack of suitable support and advice from an outside agency has resulted in pupils not developing good careers awareness. The school's frequent efforts to improve attendance have not always been as effective as they could be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership is seen in the improvements since the previous inspection, with the greatly upgraded premises now allowing much better coverage of the curriculum and access for all pupils to different activities. Further developments are planned. Staff training is very well focused on the current and anticipated needs of staff and pupils, although plans for staff training do not yet fully reflect the changes in the pupil population, such as increasing numbers of pupils with autism. The school has received awards for the high quality of its community links, such as through the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Pupils have achieved Entry Level passes in an increasing number of subjects, with new ones being introduced each year. Strong links have been forged with schools in America, Ghana and Hungary, as well as with other special and mainstream schools, and with Boston College. Many local companies open their doors to students for one-week, or longer, work placements. The school's monitoring system has been used as an example of best practice in educational conferences. This involves all staff observing each other's lessons, fully discussing their observations, doing work scrutinies, and checking planning, targets and assessments.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

27 September 2006 Dear Pupils and Students The Eresby School, Eresby Avenue, Spilsby, Lincolnshire, PE23 5HU You may remember when I came to your school not long ago and came into your lessons, talked with some of you, and had dinner with you. Thank you for helping me to find out about your school, and for telling me what you think of it. I can see that you go to a good school, and that you mostly work hard and do well in class. You learn how to look after yourselves well, and some of you have good work experiences and go to college. A lot of you get the chance to go on some very good visits - like the one to America very soon. Your teachers help you by making your learning interesting in a lot of different subjects, and just about hard enough for you to have to try hard. The other helpers in your classes do a lot to help as well. Some of you are good at helping your teachers to decide how well you are doing, and deciding what you need to do next. Your headteacher is very good at making the right things happen in school. The teachers, and everyone else in school, are good at helping her and working with her. There are some things that could be done better in the future: - The school should think about children who don't speak as well as others, and see if they can do more to help them. Teachers have already started to do this by looking at how well they use some of the equipment in school. - Another thing is for teachers to look for new and exciting ways to work with some of you who can't do a lot for yourselves, especially some of the children who haven't been in school long. - The last thing is to make the Post-16 room better for you older students, so you have somewhere to relax, and make your own snacks and drinks. Some of you told me it didn't feel any different to when you were in other classes. Best wishes from Trevor Watts Inspector