

Kennel Lane School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110190
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	310217
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacque Cook

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	172
6th form	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Shillcock
Headteacher	Miss Andrea de Bunsen
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2005
School address	Kennel Lane Bracknell RG42 2EX
Telephone number	01344 483872
Fax number	01344 304224

Age group	2–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

A school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and those with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). A few pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), physical difficulties or have degenerative conditions. Almost two thirds of the pupils are boys. A very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups, predominately Asian or African. Seven do not have English as their first language and are at an early stage of language acquisition. Five pupils are looked after by the local authority. Last year a relatively high number of pupils joined or left the school other than at the usual time of admission. Attainment on entry is often very low. A group of ten primary aged pupils are based in a local primary school for four days a week.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Kennel Lane is an outstanding school. It is, as its headline statement begins, 'an inclusive school' that is fast becoming an essential and integral part of the local community. The headteacher is highly successful in involving all staff in taking responsibility for making improvements across the school. Support assistants, for example, regularly make suggestions and lead, organise and manage initiatives. Robust monitoring arrangements ensure that all pupils make at least good progress, and they do outstandingly well in the primary part of the school. All pupils make excellent progress in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and improve their communication skills exceptionally well. These are vital areas for their future well-being. They make excellent progress towards challenging targets. Pupils who attend a local primary school for four days each week make exceptionally good progress in both their academic and their social development. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but not consistently so. Although a very significant proportion is outstanding, there are also a few incidents of satisfactory teaching and learning, largely in Key Stage 3. In these lessons, work is presented in an uninteresting way with similar activities that do not enthuse pupils to achieve high standards. However, a very well planned programme of professional development has made noteworthy improvements to the quality of teaching. New staff, who may have come from mainstream, are extremely well supported and they are trained effectively so they quickly gain the necessary expertise.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They clearly enjoy their work because most teachers plan lessons extremely well, which ensures pupils find them interesting and at the right level of difficulty. Due to a comprehensive PSHCE programme, most pupils have an excellent understanding of what is needed for a healthy lifestyle. As far as they are able, many pupils know what they should do to look after themselves. The outstanding curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to develop the skills needed for when they leave school. In Year 11, pupils gain a good range of external awards and many transfer to the sixth form or attend college. They all learn a great deal from work experience. Pupils contribute very well to their school community. School council members take their role very seriously and are proud of the changes they have made. Many fund raising activities during the year contribute to charities in the wider community.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Excellent arrangements help pupils with behaviour difficulties to learn to conform and contribute very well to the outstanding behaviour in the school. Careful monitoring helps vulnerable pupils to make outstanding progress. The individual pupil really matters in this school.

The excellent leadership and management of the school are firmly based on an on-going and effective evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. Many changes leading to improvements have been made since the last inspection. The school has established itself in the local community as an outstanding source of expertise for helping pupils with ASD and those with behavioural difficulties. Staff have built strong links with local businesses, which have broadened opportunities for pupils to be involved with work related learning. The curriculum has been developed exceptionally well and effective, consistently used assessment procedures introduced to ensure that expectations of pupils' progress are high. Weaknesses are quickly identified and action taken to make improvements. The very well developed school improvement plan is

monitored closely to ensure the school continues to move forward. This track-record demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve further. Governance is good.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students in the sixth form make good progress and achieve well. They are proud of their work and are keen to become more independent. The outstanding curriculum makes excellent use of the local community and all students achieve external awards before they leave school. Due to the excellent support and guidance provided by staff and external agencies, students' personal development is outstanding. They are very well prepared for their future lives. Students' behaviour is exceptionally good, as the management of behaviour at all levels is excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching assistants are highly skilled in helping students to do things for themselves. Students enjoy planning, budgeting and cooking meals, which they then eat. They gain a great deal from the well-chosen work experience and college attendance. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good, and the school is further developing strengths in this area.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The outstanding organisation, planning and management of the Foundation Stage class leads to children achieving extremely well in all the areas of learning. Excellent use of skilled support staff contributes to the very high quality of teaching and learning and the accurate assessment of progress. Children grow in confidence and independence. They develop their communication language and literacy skills extremely well due to the excellent use of additional means of communication where it is appropriate. Very high levels of care and guidance ensure that the needs of each child are met. A clear structure to the day helps those with ASD to learn and children successfully tackle activities which they find difficult, because they are so very well supported.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching in Key Stage 3 so that lessons consistently enthuse pupils and motivate them to do their best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Close working with the speech and language therapists leads to pupils making excellent progress towards meeting challenging targets for improving communication skills. Pupils use, where appropriate, a range of strategies confidently. Children at the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 to 6 make huge gains in all areas of the curriculum because they are generally very well taught. Pupils who attend the local primary school rise to the high expectations of the mainstream environment. The support they receive and the confidence they gain contributes to their outstanding achievement. The very well planned PSHCE programme ensures that all pupils learn skills that prepare them exceptionally well for their future lives. There are no significant measurable differences between the progress of the different groups of pupils in the school. However, looked-after children make consistently better progress than their peers.

This is partly because they thrive due to the routine and structure in the school but is also because their needs and achievements are very well monitored. Any difficulties are quickly spotted and dealt with so learning can continue. Students in Years 11 and 14 achieve well in a broad range of external awards, which are very well-matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding with particular strengths in moral and social development. They are polite and care for each other, learning to take turns and respect others. This contributes to their excellent behaviour. According to one pupil, 'It's really special, this school.' This is a view reflected in the enjoyment of all pupils and their good attendance. They are confident in expressing their views and participate enthusiastically in a 'Tell Us' event where everyone contributes their opinions about the school. Their independence grows in leaps and bounds. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly learn to work and play alongside each other amicably. The school council is pro-active in suggesting improvements for the school. It has worked with the Friends of the School group to plan and raise funds for school equipment and a garden area. Pupils develop a clear understanding of healthy living. Younger pupils are enthusiastic about eating fruit and vegetable snacks, which they call 'sports candy'. They participate enthusiastically in daily exercise sessions. One pupil showed the contents of his 'healthy' lunchbox and a student explained that he plays badminton after school at a local centre. Pupils learn to safeguard themselves. They know who to turn to with a problem and are proud to be 'buddies' to help in this respect. Older students develop excellent social skills and work skills including teamwork. Pupils are pleased with their successful fund-raising for others such as Sports Relief and the Shoe Box Appeal. The sixth form students recently held a coffee morning for the elderly in the area.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Lesson planning carefully ensures that work is suitably difficult and the right amount of support provided for all pupils to succeed. Teachers are clear about what is to be learned and tracking systems are excellent. Levels of expertise are high so that the needs of the different groups of pupils are met successfully. Support staff are very well skilled and often work independently with pupils exceptionally well. Particularly in the primary part of the school, excellent use is made of additional means of communication. These include signing, symbols and the Picture Exchange Communication system (PECs). Through their constant use, all pupils practise and develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. Praise and encouragement are used exceptionally well and build pupils' self-esteem successfully. As a result, pupils are prepared to try hard and persevere. The consistent use of specific strategies to help pupils conform contributes to the excellent behaviour in lessons. There are outstanding examples of interesting and stimulating experiences that support learning. Pupils in a Year 5 and 6 class, for example, feel more adult as they have their own 'office' space rather than a desk. In-trays for work on the left and out-trays on the right continue to support those with ASD who need this routine.

In contrast, very occasionally, particularly in Key Stage 3, lessons do not motivate pupils to do their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Strong departmental and subject leadership has ensured that the curriculum is constantly developing so the changing needs of pupils are effectively met. Careful adaptation ensures that pupils with ASD and PMLD develop essential communication skills. At the Foundation Stage, children are now given more opportunities to choose activities. This is highly successful in developing their independence. The PSHCE programme is very well planned and contributes extremely well to the all round development of the pupil. A healthy lifestyle is promoted throughout the school. In the primary department, pupils are energised and ready to learn through movement and keep fit. In addition to the link with the local primary school, there is also a beneficial science, design and technology and mathematics link for secondary age pupils with a local mainstream school. Older pupils learn a great deal from activities such as making and selling ices on sports day. Sixth form students form businesses such as car washing and jewellery making. This improves their numeracy, literacy, self-help skills and teamwork. The excellent opportunities for accreditation continue to increase and provide well for the wide range of pupils and students. Work experience opportunities are very well adapted to pupils' needs, and all pupils and students take part. The curriculum is enriched through the use of the local community. Pupils continue to talk about a visit last term where they drove diggers and they say they enjoyed the 'recycling robots' workshop. There is also a very good range of lunchtime activities and clubs. Residential trips provide great opportunities for secondary pupils and sixth form students to develop their independence and lifeskills further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Most parents hold the school in high regard and are appreciative of its provision and of its positive effect on their child's progress. The school works closely with parents, for example when meeting to discuss pupils' progress three times a year. Older pupils are involved in agreeing their targets. Staff devise an excellent 'Management of Learning' document for each pupil setting out how factors such as poor organisational skills can be managed. Systems for rewarding pupils and for managing behaviour are excellent. Younger pupils talk enthusiastically about additional 'choosing time', 'golden time' and small prizes that they earn.

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' health and safety are extremely rigorous. Child protection arrangements are clear, well understood and supported by training for all staff. Procedures for supporting and monitoring pupils with English as an additional language and looked-after children are very good. There are excellent links with specialist professionals, including the child and adolescent mental health services.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher delegates responsibilities extremely well through a highly successful style of management. This has drawn together a team of very committed staff that are empowered to make improvements to the quality of provision and pupils' progress. The deputy headteacher, for example, consults, draws up and drives the school improvement plan forward effectively. A support assistant has suggested, planned thoroughly and is implementing a horticultural course, and another assistant organises and manages the school council extremely well. The thriving, highly regarded, outreach provision is now providing excellent training to skill staff in mainstream and other special schools. An innovative award scheme is being piloted to accredit whole school training in ASD. Extensive and very beneficial links have been forged with several local businesses. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation schedule ensures all aspects of the school are kept under review. Much work has been done to remedy any deficiencies that have been identified. The quality of teaching has been systematically improved through high quality professional development and, where appropriate, specific support, training and mentoring. The management of the sixth form has improved considerably and is now good. Changes to the assessment procedures and the introduction of effective measures to check the accuracy of teachers' judgements have contributed to the precision of the excellent target-setting arrangements. Governance has improved. The curriculum sub-committee now has a key role in monitoring provision.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

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 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	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?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	2
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	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	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 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kennel Lane School, Bracknell, RG42 2EX

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when my colleague and I visited recently. May we particularly thank those of you that talked with us and told us how you thoroughly enjoy school and how well you are learning. You are right, Kennel Lane is an outstanding school.

This is what we liked about your school.

- You all make at least good progress and do outstandingly well in PSHCE and in improving your communication skills.
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage and those in Years 1 to 6 make excellent progress.
- Your personal development is outstanding and your behaviour is excellent.
- You try to stay healthy by eating well and taking exercise.
- You are taught well.
- The way staff look after you is outstanding.
- The school is led and managed very effectively.
- The staff work very hard to make sure that you are taught the right things.

This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Your teachers are always trying to help you improve and we have asked them to make the school even better by making all your lessons as good as most of them are.

Yours sincerely

Jacque Cook

Lead Inspector