

The Ash Villa South Rauceby

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120747
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339763
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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	8–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Lawlor
Headteacher	Mr Neil Barton
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Four lessons were observed and the two teachers seen. The inspector observed school meetings and spoke to school staff, governors and a representative of the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development planning and self-evaluation along with one parental questionnaire and those from pupils and staff. The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

the quality of assessment procedures and how effectively this translates into effective planning and target setting

- the quality of partnerships with other professionals and schools to support students and ensure that disruption to their schooling is minimised
- the effectiveness of leaders and the governing body in monitoring and evaluating strategies to improve on the school's performance.

Information about the school

Ash Villa is a designated hospital school accommodating up to 18 pupils although there were nine pupils on roll at the time of the inspection. Primary aged pupils are no longer admitted and all the students are of secondary age. A large majority of students were previously in mainstream schools. All students are admitted to the hospital ward to which the school is attached for a period of mental health assessment. The students suffer from a range of mental health problems including self-harming, eating disorders and post traumatic stress disorders. The school is part of a multi-disciplinary community of health professionals and children's services. Some of the students have spent considerable periods out of education prior to their admission to the hospital. Their length of stay varies from a few days to over a year.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ash Villa provides a good education for the students during their stay in the hospital. The curriculum and some elements of the students' personal development are outstanding and underpinned by the high quality of support and care. Students enter the school with severe and debilitating mental illness but, during their stay, they overcome significant barriers to their learning and successfully return to their mainstream schools. Because of the high quality of curriculum activities and good and occasionally outstanding teaching, many students go on in their mainstream schools, or at Ash Villa, to attain results in GCSE which are close to the national average.

The students make good progress. They follow an individual curriculum in basic skills and they are also often taught on an individual basis. Teachers collect a huge amount of information about each student's progress and well being and because of this are able to write very detailed and valuable reports for medical staff, other schools and parents. This information is not, however, always used well enough to create sufficiently focused and challenging short-term targets for the students and this can slow down the pace of their learning.

The curriculum is outstanding because it is so carefully adapted to the needs and abilities of each student. The school has developed a wide range of vocational and lifeskills qualifications for older students since the previous inspection. These are accessible by students of all abilities. As a result, every student is able to achieve success. There is an exemplary range of sporting and cultural activities to enhance the curriculum. This plays an important part in helping restore the students' confidence and interest in learning.

The students feel safe and secure in the relaxed supportive atmosphere. There is a strong community spirit. The students' relationships with staff are excellent and their behaviour is exemplary. A major strength of the school lies in the quality of support the students receive in developing their personal skills, which results in most of them making good progress. The students receive excellent care and guidance. Each student has a 'key nurse' who works closely with education staff to promote the student's wellbeing. There is effective liaison with hospital staff and with the students' secondary schools to ensure the students are able to continue their GCSE studies.

The headteacher provides good leadership and management. He inspires and drives a culture of continuous development and there is a clear common purpose which permeates the life of the school. The headteacher is aware, however, that some aspects of the recording of the students' progress could be presented more clearly to give him a better overview of the school's performance and so guide future developments. There

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has been sustained improvement in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection. The present good performance reflects the strength of the school's self evaluation strategies and the commitment of leaders and staff to do the very best for the students in their care. As a result, there is a good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the efficiency of procedures for recording the progress which students make so that teachers are better able to create focused, short-term targets for them.
- Make better use of information about the students' progress to establish more clearly how well the school is performing and to guide development planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The achievement of the great majority of students is good because of the very effective support the students receive for their learning and personal development. Through this support, the students are helped to maintain the standards they had attained before they entered the school and most of them go on to fulfil their potential either at Ash Villa or when back in their mainstream schools. The school's results show consistent improvement in the levels of students' performance since the previous inspection. The attainment of most students, in Year 11, is at nationally expected levels. Students make good progress in lessons. They are motivated to do well by skilled teaching and they remain on task for long periods of concentrated work. Teachers are constantly on hand to discuss their work, to advise them and to explain difficulties. As a result, the students' self-confidence and belief in their abilities develop well. In one lesson, for example, a student made excellent progress in using a microscope. He was surprised and delighted when a tiny creature walked across the specimen he was examining and the teacher ensured that he assimilated a wealth of new information about bugs and beetles. However, although students regularly discuss their progress in lessons with their teachers, the inconsistencies in setting short term targets means students are sometimes unclear as to how to improve their work.

The school is a happy, calm and supportive haven where the students enjoy learning. They feel very well cared for by staff and they state that there is no bullying or unpleasantness. Their behaviour is exemplary and they demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. The students' attendance is good although their time in lessons is necessarily frequently interrupted by medical or therapeutic sessions and these breaks in continuity can affect their overall performance. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. The students demonstrate high levels of empathy, tolerance and understanding. They respond well to the many opportunities to improve their skills of interaction and working in teams. They develop an excellent cultural understanding and a good knowledge of their local communities. They support and initiate plans to improve aspects of their life at the school in their daily meetings. The students make good

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progress in specific accredited courses in 'Preparation for Working Life' and 'Financial Awareness' and many vocational and lifeskills courses include elements of work related study. All the pupils gain a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles through food technology lessons and the many and varied sporting opportunities and they develop a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Their good progress in basic skills and in developing their self-confidence and independence equips them very well for their transition back to school or college.

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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. The teachers maintain excellent relationships with students, who feel very well supported and confident to attempt new work. Teachers are skilled in asking well directed questions and in knowing when to explain areas of difficulty. They plan in great detail for each lesson and this helps to ensure lessons proceed at a lively pace. Teachers fully explain the points they award to students for their progress and effort and during the inspection, students were heard to say that they were looking forward to the next session. The students self-assess their

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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progress to some degree at the end of lessons, in partnership with their teachers. The teachers know their students very well and adapt work appropriately for students of all abilities. They do not however always efficiently record the progress which students make. This makes it more difficult for them to set clear short-term targets which the students understand and which would help them to learn faster.

The students develop a strong interest in their studies because the curriculum is full of opportunities for them to develop sporting and cultural interests as well as providing many valuable opportunities to develop work-based learning and lifeskills. The students' learning in basic skills is very well tailored to their abilities. The school has developed a wide range of vocationally-based courses which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. The students also follow short Lifeskills based courses in topics such as First Aid, Food Hygiene and in Child Protection, a course designed for those students whose ambition is to work with children. The school is particularly successful in providing artistic experiences. The students may study art to GCSE level and there are many examples of the students' work on display. The school has good links with a local gallery which also displays examples of the students' work. The school provides a high standard of drama teaching and a performance involving most students took place during the inspection. These opportunities together with effective teaching of personal, health and social education, help to restore the students' self-confidence, their creativity and their ability to deal with unfamiliar situations.

The quality of care and support is outstanding. Teachers work effectively with clinical practitioners to provide highly effective care and support for each individual. Every student is under the direct care of their form tutor in school and their key nurse while in the hospital. Each student's progress is reviewed weekly and in-depth by a multi-disciplinary team and programmes can be adapted very quickly to take account of each student's needs. The students are offered high levels of support tailored to their needs when they reintegrate into their mainstream schools. Students are very appreciative of the support and guidance they are given. They respond very well to the care and interest in their welfare displayed by all staff.

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 headteacher has ensured that consistent progress has been made since the previous inspection. He maintains good relationships with clinical staff. There is effective

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communication between the education and health teams which leads to a high level of support for students' academic and personal development and which plays a large part in their continuing good achievement. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding and fully comply with national guidelines. For instance the school has made exceptional efforts to ensure students do not self-harm, even to the extent of buying a portable metal detector.

The management committee are firmly committed to ensuring the students' progress and maintain a good level of challenge to and support for the school. The assessment and monitoring of students' work has been improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher is aware that information about the students' progress is not presented in a way which easily enables him to monitor their achievements with a view to informing development planning. The school effectively evaluates its work. The governors, headteacher and staff form an effective team which continually reflects on and reviews performance in teaching, the curriculum and the students' progress. Partnerships with mainstream schools are good and continue to develop and this contributes significantly to the students' progress. The teachers strive to maintain the equal opportunities of all students through the many opportunities for individualised learning, so that there is no discrimination. The school promotes community cohesion well. Students have a good understanding of the cohesiveness of the school and where possible the staff encourage the students to involve themselves in the local community. The school is actively seeking links with other schools around the world to develop further the students' understanding of other faiths and cultures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

One completed questionnaire was received. This parent expressed complete satisfaction with the school's work and commented, 'The staff at Ash Villa have been fantastic. They have renewed his interest in his education and given him back the belief that despite a horrendous year, he can still achieve his GCSE goals.'

The school regularly asks parents for their views. These consistently show that parents feel the school expects high standards of achievement and behaviour and that they feel welcome to discuss any concerns with school staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Ash Villa South Rauceby 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 inspector received one completed questionnaire by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 9 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	100	0	0	0	0	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)	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	1	100	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupil's 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.



12 May 2010

Dear Students,

Inspection of The Ash Villa, South Rauceby, Sleaford, NG34 8QA

Not long ago I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether I could suggest anything to make the school better. You made me welcome and I enjoyed meeting some of you in the classrooms and the morning meeting.

I was only with you for two days. That was, however, long enough for me to see that you enjoy being at the school and that you are making good progress in both your academic and especially in your personal development. The school gives you an excellent quality of support and overall its performance is good. There are some more strengths and two areas to improve. The main strengths are:

- you are all working hard and making good progress in your learning and your personal development
- the curriculum you follow is very well matched to your academic and personal development. You have many opportunities to develop your sporting and cultural knowledge and interests
- all the adults have a real interest in your welfare and look after you very well. The arrangements to keep you safe are excellent.

This is how the school could improve further:

- teachers should write down more regularly and clearly how well you are doing so that they can help you understand your own progress better and how to improve your work
- information about your progress should be used more efficiently to help the staff to establish how well the school is performing and to help guide future development.

I have suggested, therefore, that the staff consider how these things might be done.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Melvyn Blackband

Lead inspector

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