

The Eresby School, Spilsby

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120760
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339768
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Peter Coates
Acting Headteacher	Michele Holiday
Date of previous school inspection	26-Sep-06
School address	Eresby Avenue Spilsby PE23 5HU
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Age group	2-19
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Ten lessons or part lessons were observed and eight teachers or teaching assistants leading lessons were seen. Meetings were held with staff, governors and local authority personnel. Pupils' views were sought, and pupil and staff surveys were undertaken. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at planning, minutes of meetings, other documentation including that relating to safeguarding, pupils' work and progress records, and 19 parental questionnaires

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- the use of the curriculum to enable individuals to achieve as well as they can
- the quality of partnerships and their impact on pupils' preparation for their futures
- middle managers' impact on driving improvement.

Information about the school

The Eresby School is a very small rural special school with pupils aged from three to nineteen years of age. Since the last inspection it has been awarded specialist status for Cognition and Learning. The school has won several other awards for its provision including International Schools Gold. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. All pupils have statements of special educational needs, half of them for severe learning difficulties (SLD). Most other pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). A small number have disorders in the autistic spectrum (ASD). A few have moderate learning difficulties (MLD). The former assistant headteacher was appointed acting headteacher in September 2009. The very few Early Years Foundation Stage children are accommodated in a joint class with Year 1 pupils.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The Eresby School is an outstanding school. The strong roots noted in the last inspection are now coming to full fruition. There is a strong unity of purpose and aims among all the staff, who share the same ambition and high expectations for every pupil. The school's temporary leaders are long standing members of the staff team, well-versed in all aspects of the school. Self-evaluation is systematic and rigorous, sustaining a strong capacity for further improvement. Only the temporary nature of the current leadership suggests a note of caution in an otherwise excellent picture where pupils' outcomes are consistently outstanding. Although governors are making concerted attempts to arrange substantive leadership, fully supported by the local authority, their efforts to date have not been successful.

The care arrangements provide pupils with outstanding guidance and support. In particular, partnerships are exceptionally effective in supporting pupils and preparing them for their future lives. The engagement with parents is also exceptional. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. As one put it, 'The school provides an exceptional environment for my child to learn and achieve his potential.'

The school is regaled with awards, including recent recognition as a specialist school for cognition and learning. This achievement reflects the substantial specialist expertise developed by the school, and investment in continued professional development of staff. The whole curriculum is adapted to meet the diverse needs of each individual pupil, and set the scene for them to make the best progress of which they are capable, from the youngest to the oldest.

The skills and experience of staff mean teaching, assessment, learning and progress are all outstanding at all ages, from the Early Years Foundation Stage right through and including the sixth form. The immediate outside area for the Early Years Foundation Stage, whilst good, is not used quite well enough to provide children with a fullest range of outdoor experience. Sixth-form students achieve as well as they possibly can and share the strength of leadership enjoyed in the rest of the school. Most partnerships are developed to the fullest extent, but the potential for involvement of other providers for the over 16s is not fully exploited. The International Schools Gold award reflects the outstanding quality of the school's work to promote community cohesion, which has included residential excursions in France, Ghana and the United States, as well as more locally in Boston and London. Pupils have many opportunities for enterprise and to use their initiative. The impact on pupils' achievement and enjoyment is enormous, especially for many in relation to communication, literacy and numeracy. They acquire many useful skills which they learn to apply to everyday demands. This includes staying safe and leading a

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healthy lifestyle, an appreciation of which pupils develop to an exceptional extent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Install substantive senior leadership as soon as possible.
- Refine planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage to provide a better balance of indoor and outdoor experiences each day.
- Increase the ways other providers are involved in the school’s post-16 provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Outcomes are outstanding in every respect because, throughout the school, pupils are offered excellent opportunities to achieve and to enjoy their learning. Attendance is above average. In the classroom, pupils are interested and stimulated by their activities as well as by the interaction with staff and each other. Pupils are extremely well behaved. They engage really well in learning, often showing high levels of enthusiasm and motivation, PMLD pupils in particular. This extends to a great many making positive contributions in school and beyond. An active school council takes its role seriously and makes many recommendations for improving school facilities. Pupils are also concerned to help others by raising money for several good causes at home and abroad.

The huge expertise staff bring to bear on promoting learning ensures every pupil makes significant progress no matter how complex their learning difficulties may be. High quality learning resources and many specialist facilities support pupils in making best use of their time to learn and make progress. The tracking of pupils' performance over time shows consistently that pupils make progress well above the average for similar pupils. Most SLD, MLD and ASD pupils, by the time they leave school, gain a broad range of accreditation, including in English, mathematics, horticulture, and personal, social and health education. They also all gain from a wide range of experiences, including work experience, and winning Duke of Edinburgh awards, that prepares them exceptionally well for their future well-being.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	*
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1

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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Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers, and assistants work as very strong teams in classrooms, using substantial expertise to help pupils and engage them in learning. As a result, their work in relation to PMLD and ASD in particular is outstanding. Assessment contributes exceptionally well to planning pupils' work and their individual targets. Where possible, pupils' evaluate what they have learnt and profit from the consistent way teachers mark their work. Work is challenging and the pace of learning is very good. The management of pupils' behaviour is very consistent leading to a positive rapport, which encourages their motivation and effort. Adults provide exceptional care, support and guidance for all pupils. Highly-trained staff provide expert support for pupils' wide range of medical and physical conditions, allowing all to take a full and happy part in school life. Pupils' personal care is undertaken sensitively. Very strong links have been established with other agencies and professionals.

The rich curriculum is fully flexible and extremely well matched to the range of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. The new Life Skills room, a development emerging from the specialist status, provides all ages with key skills for living, such as preparing meals. Additional activities provided after school, and imaginative curriculum-related visits and visitors, which include visiting musicians and historians, further enhance learning. In addition, each student is given the opportunity to take part in a residential course carefully matched to their needs, including to France, the United States and Ghana.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

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Pupils benefit enormously from the enduring ambition and capacity for continuous improvement resulting from the exceptional teamwork of the acting headteacher and her team of managers, teachers and support staff. Target setting and tracking each individual’s progress underpins the good capacity. The united team works in great harmony, pursuing the school aims and achieving very high standards in provision and equality of opportunity across the full age range. Governors support the school well in helping to set direction and are otherwise outstanding, but their ongoing lack of success in appointing a substantive headteacher places a burden on staff. However, they make absolutely sure that safeguarding procedures are highly effective. Because of the continual close scrutiny and outstanding office administration, these are excellent. Staff and governor training takes a high priority and is a key element in the school's unfaltering success. Along with the staff, governors promote community cohesion outstandingly well. The school's contribution is carefully assessed, is constantly under review and expansion, feeding into the development plan. Exceptionally strong partnerships embed the school in its community and it actively contributes locally, nationally and globally, by taking part in many community events and supporting global projects.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress as a result of the high quality teaching, care, support and guidance they receive. They receive exceptional care and support. Outstanding leadership and management ensure the range of provision from within school and beyond is available and coordinated in meeting all needs. Staff possess a high level of expertise in meeting children's needs and providing the full range of learning opportunities indoors but, whilst the impact on learning is very minor, the

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fully integrated use of the outside is a project in hand and is currently not fully developed. Particular strengths stand out in relation to improving children's communication, physical skills and their personal development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

Sixth-form students make excellent progress in their learning and in their personal development, whatever their individual needs. This is because they benefit from expert teaching, and a curriculum offering a range of interesting and useful courses providing opportunities for external accreditation. As a result, everyone gets a useful qualification. Students thrive because partnerships with parents are very strong and everyone works together. Against this backdrop, students thrive and are highly supportive of each other. Outstanding care and guidance ensure that attention to developing students' personal skills and preparation for their future lives is given a very high priority. As a result, when students leave they are very well prepared for moving on to further forms of education or training. There is emphasis on work-related learning and experience and this contributes to securing smooth transition into future placements. Currently, opportunities for students to integrate more regularly with the community are being given even more attention to ensure that the involvement of other providers improves still further. All aspects of leadership and management are excellent and contribute fully to students' exceptional learning and progress.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

About a third of eligible parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all responses were positive for all questions. All additional comments expressed strong support for the school and all that it does. These views expressed by parents

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and carers fully reflect inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Eresby School, Spilsby 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 inspection team received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 48 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	58	8	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	84	3	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	79	3	16	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	11	58	8	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	74	5	26	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)	11	58	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	16	84	3	16	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	58	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	84	3	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	16	84	3	16	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 all 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 pupils' 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.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Eresby School, Spilsby PE23 5HU

I enjoyed my visit to your school very much and thank you for making me feel so welcome.

Your school is outstanding. All of the staff who teach and support you, make sure you are very well looked after. They have made school a lovely, welcoming place for you to come and learn in. As a result, you make excellent progress. You behave really well, attend school as much as possible and thoroughly enjoy the time you spend there.

Those of you who chatted to me told me that you are very happy at school. In all of the lessons I visited, your teachers made the activities interesting for you and you made very good efforts with your work.

Your acting headteacher and all of the staff have done an exceptional job to make your school outstanding and they are determined to go on making it even better. I have asked your governors to make sure a permanent headteacher is appointed soon because not having one is a bit unsettling for everyone, even though everyone works really well with the acting headteacher, and school runs very smoothly indeed. I have asked the governors and staff to do two more things:

- Help the youngest children to learn outside a bit more often
- Increase the involvement of other providers in what is available for you after you reach the age of 16.

You and all of the staff have a lot to be proud of. Keep on enjoying school, and working as hard as you do, because that will prepare you as well as possible for your future.

I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane
Lead inspector

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