

The Pilgrim School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120753
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358833
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Jones HMI

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Thornalley
Headteacher	Christine Seymour
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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Age group	4–16
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited five of the school's centres and one partner school; observed ten lessons and ten teachers; made one home visit and had a discussion with a parent. They held meetings with pupils, governors and staff, and re-integration and support officers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plan, policies and safeguarding information. Seven parent and carer questionnaires were scrutinised alongside parent and carer surveys conducted by the school.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Learning and progress across subjects and groups of learners and if progress is rigorously tracked and monitored.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum provision for each pupil in different circumstances.
- The effectiveness of the strategies to support all pupils to attend full-time.

Information about the school

The Pilgrim School is established in a hospital and has a large outreach area, with many centres and home tuition. It serves the whole of Lincolnshire. Admission is dependent on a medical or mental health referral. Pupils have a range of medical, emotional and psychiatric difficulties and have histories of severely disrupted education prior to entry. The numbers of pupils fluctuate throughout the year. Currently 59 pupils are dual-registered with other schools and ten pupils are singly registered. Thirteen pupils have statements of special educational needs and seven of these pupils have a diagnosis of autism. The school also provides a reintegration and support service for young women of school age who are pregnant or mothers. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage but as there have been no children of this age for two years, inspectors have not reported on this provision. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status.

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

Pilgrim is a good school. There are many outstanding features including the outstanding care and flexible support provided. This shows in the dramatic improvement pupils are enabled to make in their attendance and social and emotional development. It is a happy, harmonious community where staff provide a safe, secure and welcoming learning environment. Academic progress is good and half of the pupils in any one year are able to be reintegrated back into their home schools. Many of the older pupils who stay at the school do well in a range of qualifications. Teachers know the pupils and their families well and demonstrate great patience in encouraging and coaxing pupils to participate. As a result pupils behave extremely well and are considerate to others. However, just occasionally, pupils are too passive in lessons and are not sufficiently challenged to think deeply or justify their answers. Although assessment, progress tracking and the use of data to inform lesson planning has greatly improved, the use of the new systems and the quality of day-to-day marking of pupils' work remain inconsistent.

The strength of the current curriculum is the way in which it is adapted to meet the highly individual needs of the pupils. The school is aware of the need to extend its provision for older pupils and is about to review its curriculum to provide more vocational opportunities. The school works extremely successfully with other agencies in order to promote pupils' mental, emotional and social well being and ensure they are able to learn effectively. The school's work with Teenage Services through their youth workers enables pupils to develop the necessary social skills and confidence to make transitions on to college and employment. In addition, the school works closely with its pupils' home schools to ensure appropriate curriculum access and is highly successful in achieving reintegration within a relatively short period. Where possible the school accesses specialist provision with other schools in order to enhance the curriculum opportunities open to pupils.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher has successfully defended the school's status as interim and not alternative provision for pupils with mental and physical difficulties. In this way, it acts as a bridge to the full provision pupils are entitled to in their home schools. Her focus on the well-being and training of staff has resulted in high levels of expertise and job satisfaction. This in turn has led to a hard-working environment with high expectations for all where every individual is valued and encouraged to do their best. Parents are kept well-informed and involved and are overwhelmingly in support of the work the school is doing. The school knows its strengths and is very accurate in its self-evaluation and what it needs to do to

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continue to improve. There is a cogent school improvement plan in place and the capacity for future improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve consistency in the assessment of pupils' progress by:
 - embedding the new tracking systems that have been introduced
 - ensuring staff, at all levels, have an awareness of how assessment can improve teaching and learning.

- Ensuring the curriculum always offers high levels of challenge by:
 - consistently matching the work set more closely to the abilities of the pupils
 - offering older pupils more flexible opportunities to follow vocational and academic pathways.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make outstanding progress in their social and emotional development in their time at the school because of the excellent care they receive. For example, pupils who have not attended school for years now attend regularly, and those who would not enter school premises when they first started are now comfortable, relaxed and able to learn in school. Attainment on entry is variable because a prerequisite of referral is that pupils have not attended school for some time. Attainment has not been graded in this report because the nature of the pupils' medical and mental conditions severely impairs their cognitive abilities and makes comparisons with national norms difficult. However, pupils enjoy their work and are able to settle quickly and concentrate. As a result academic progress is good. Nearly half of pupils in Year 11 in 2010 left with at least one GCSE, and a sixth left with five A* to C grades. Pupils with statements of educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress because of skilled, specialist teaching. Pupils were observed using computer skills well to plan and produce a business plan, and others were seen successfully applying previously learnt and practised skills in an art lesson. Pregnant teenagers receive carefully tailored support which in most cases enables them to continue with their education.

Pupils feel exceptionally safe in school and say there is no bullying. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, and use the internet safely. They have a good knowledge of the importance of healthy eating and can identify which foods are good for them. There are currently limited opportunities to participate in physical activity. This is because of lack of access to suitable facilities and the extreme anxiety pupils experience in unfamiliar situations. Despite these challenges pupils are active in the community. They visit libraries, help to raise money for charity and take part in a range of support groups.

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Attendance is 82 which is below national average. However, in the context of the school's work this represents exceptional improvement, which comes about as a result of the school's success in helping parents, carers and pupils regain their confidence in the education system. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. From starting points of being too unwell to manage even the small details of everyday life they are encouraged to cope emotionally and socially with the future and the changes it will bring. Pupils have a good understanding of the progress they are making and are made aware of the next steps. They are helped to achieve realistic aspirations and go onto appropriate college courses.

Pupils make great strides in their social development as they learn to tolerate and work alongside others. They know the difference between right and wrong as is apparent in their excellent behaviour. The quality of relationships at the school and the way in which pupils are encouraged to accept their own unique identities as they learn to cope with their disabilities has a tangible spiritual dimension.

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	*
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are calm and purposeful with well-planned learning objectives. Teachers have high expectations and foster excellent relationships. They have good specialist understanding and this enables them to tailor learning styles and environments to meet individual needs. Tasks set are age-appropriate with a focus on what the pupil

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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is going to do at the next stage of education, training or work which helps to maintain motivation. Occasionally the work is not pitched at the right level and pupils are not sufficiently challenged or the teacher is too dominant and does not give the pupils enough time to reflect and consider their answer. The school assesses all pupils on entry using a computerised testing system which identifies the gaps in learning. Successful strategies are then put into place to meet these learning deficits. A new system to track ongoing progress has recently been introduced but this is not yet used consistently across all classes. The quality of marking is variable across teaching groups so not all pupils know what they have to do to improve their work.

Pupils have access to uniquely tailored curriculum opportunities. Older pupils are unlikely to return to their schools and are therefore provided with opportunities, which will allow them access to employment and education post-16. However, for younger pupils the emphasis is on giving them the skills and opportunities to prepare for reintegration to their home school. Accredited courses in personal and social development and life skills help pupils prepare for the next stage in their lives. Visitors from outside the immediate school community, such as advanced skills teachers in art, music workshops, mental health professionals and former pupils who have moved on, are all used to enrich the sometimes limited life experiences of the pupils. The school has launched a review of the curriculum in order to develop further vocational and academic pathways for older pupils.

Outstanding, individual support is provided for pupils according to the nature of their medical and social needs. This includes well-informed specialist staff provided within school and by outside agencies, and is a factor in helping pupils to succeed. Information about careers and future educational opportunities enables older pupils to make informed decisions about which courses to take. Attendance is meticulously monitored and effective practices are used to promote the attendance of previously very poor attendees. The reintegration and support officers form excellent links with pupils, parents and carers in their own homes and ease transition back into full-time education. The school is proactive in supporting close links with partner schools. For example, the school has pushed for a variety of parenting courses to be run at the schools with teenage pregnancies to support young parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher has a clear vision for improving achievement. She has built a close knit, dedicated team who all work together well for the benefit of the pupils. The governing body is very knowledgeable about and supportive of the school. It makes a valuable contribution by asking challenging questions and raising areas of concern. Staffing has been restructured so that leadership is more delegated and there is a more collaborative approach to moving the school forward. However, the addition to the leadership team to two assistant heads is relatively new and has not had time to make a full impact. The role of middle managers in ensuring consistent tracking of progress across the curriculum has yet to be fully developed. Although the school has given some thought to its contribution to the community in terms of cultural diversity, it has not been proactive by carrying out an audit of the impact of its work and implementing a plan of action to address any issues. Clear equalities policies are in place. They are effective because the curriculum is tailored to meet individual needs. Rigorous policies and procedures cover all aspects of safeguarding. These are routinely reviewed, and at the time of the inspection, all safeguarding requirements were meticulously addressed.

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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Very few questionnaires reached the inspection team because of postal delays due to the bad weather. However those that did were unanimous in their praise for the work of the school in supporting and helping their children. Parent and carer surveys conducted on a regular basis by the school are similarly positive and the one parent spoken to on a home visit could not speak highly enough about the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Pilgrim School 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 seven completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 69 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total		Total		Total		Total	
My child enjoys school	2	29	3	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	4	57	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	71	1	14	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	57	2	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	86	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	71	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	29	3	43	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)	3	43	2	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	86	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	43	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	71	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	71	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	71	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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring term 2009/10 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 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.



10 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Pilgrim School, Boston PE21 9QS

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school on 8 and 9 December. We enjoyed talking with you. Pilgrim is a good school. It has many outstanding features. Shown below are our findings about what is good about your school and what it needs to do to get even better.

Strengths

- You have made dramatic progress in your attendance and social skills, and some of you succeed well in your examinations and gain good results.
- You are very well looked after and your individual needs are met so that you can confidently move on to the next stage in your lives.
- Those of you who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well because of the extra help you get.
- You behave extremely well and told us you feel safe and there is no bullying.
- The school is very well managed and outstanding links are made with your parents and carers, your home schools and other experts who can help you improve.

Areas for improvement

- The school could keep a better track of the progress you are making in your lessons.
- The school should make sure the work you are set is always hard enough to challenge you and make you do your best.

We wish all of you success in your studies and thank you once again for your help with this inspection.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

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