

Rachel Madocks School

Eagle Avenue, Cowplain, Waterloo, PO8 9XP

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good and sometimes excellent progress, particularly in their communication skills and personal development. All pupils share a real keenness to learn.
- Teaching is good. Staff are skilled in helping pupils overcome barriers to their learning caused by communication difficulties or other additional needs.
- Pupils are considerate and respectful to one another in and out of lessons. They feel safe and secure in school. This is because the staff manage behaviour consistently well.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their adult lives.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff provide well-planned activities and experiences for children.
- The development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent.
- The headteacher, with strong support from the deputy headteacher and senior staff, has shown determination in checking and improving the quality of teaching. This has ensured that the increasing complexity of pupils' needs is met.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. It challenges and supports leaders well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not move the pupils on quickly enough to new learning.
- Work set for pupils is not always set at the right level.
- The range of courses on offer, including at GCSE where appropriate, needs to be increased, particularly for the most able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 episodes of teaching. All were jointly observed with the headteacher and/or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, members of staff, including senior leaders, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors talked informally to pupils and staff around the school.
- There were 26 responses to the online inspection questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors took into account the school's own surveys. Questionnaire responses from 40 members of staff were also considered.
- The inspectors scrutinised examples of pupils' past and present work and looked at various documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and planning, information on pupils' academic progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lily Evans

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs, with over a third having profound and multiple learning difficulties. A high proportion of pupils have severe learning difficulties, including an increasing number with a diagnosis of autism. Other groups include those with sensory, physical, and complex health care needs.
- The majority of pupils are White British boys. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low, and there are no pupils new to speaking English.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is well above average. This funding is for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after.
- There are no Year 7 pupils on roll. There have been Year 7 pupils in previous years).
- The school does not enter pupils early for examinations.
- The older pupils experience work-related opportunities at the Acorn Community Centre, Hampshire.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and further improve pupils' achievement by:
 - setting activities at the right level so that all pupils are given challenging work, particularly the most able
 - making sure that teachers move the most able pupils on to new learning activities, so that they can make faster progress
 - ensuring teachers give sufficient direction to teaching assistants to support pupils' learning.
- Strengthen further leadership and management by:
 - increasing the range of courses available, including those at GCSE level, particularly for the most able.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All groups of pupils, irrespective of individual special educational needs or disabilities, achieve well from their low starting points.
- Progress in communicating, speaking and listening is especially strong. All staff are highly skilled in using consistently communication aids and resources to help pupils understand what they are learning.
- Pupils make outstanding gains in their personal, social and emotional development because of the many opportunities to take on responsibility; for example, when acting as sports leaders and organising lunchtime games for their classmates.
- Some pupils who have the most profound and multiple learning difficulties move from having very limited communication skills to confidently using symbols and technological aids to express their needs and feelings.
- Pupils with a diagnosis of autism make good progress and learn how to manage their own anxieties and behaviour. This is because teachers effectively use visual timetables and symbols to help pupils to understand the order of the day and when to start and finish activities.
- High quality medical, therapeutic and physical support provided onsite enables pupils with specific health needs not to miss school by attending medical appointments. As a result, they achieve similarly to their classmates.
- The most able pupils make good progress in reading because they are confident to break down words to help them tackle unfamiliar ones. Less able pupils use appropriate signing, pictures and symbols to read simple sentences.
- In mathematics, pupils achieve well because teachers plan regular opportunities for them to use and apply their mathematical skills; for example, by working out the cost of shopping or the correct change to give to customers in the school café.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional government funding achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers in English and mathematics. This is because the extra funding is used to provide additional therapy, individual support and resources to enable all pupils to make good progress. This demonstrates the school's continuous commitment to ensuring that every pupil has an equal opportunity to learn.
- In physical education, pupils make rapid progress. Pupils with additional physical difficulties gain exceptionally from the opportunities provided by the hydrotherapy pool to extend their muscles and bodies outside the normal limits they experience.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because they are provided with a range of stimulating activities and effective teaching that help them to make sense of the world around them.
- By the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form, pupils achieve well and gain nationally recognised academic and work-related qualifications. Pupils enjoy and develop their self-confidence from this work, especially through their regular visits to the local community. All pupils go on to further education, training or other specialist provisions.
- Pupils who attend off-site training make good progress in developing their work-related skills which prepares them well for adult life.
- Achievement is not outstanding because not all pupils make the progress they are capable of, particularly the most able.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Leaders' own observations agree with those of the inspection team.
- Teachers work extremely well with therapists and specialist staff to provide excellent intensive

all-round support for pupils who have more complex medical, physical and sensory difficulties, so that no precious learning time is lost.

- Staff are skilled in the physical management of pupils, so that they are prepared well by being in the best positions to access learning, such as by using standing frames or lying boards.
- Teaching resources are used well so that pupils can learn, irrespective of their disabilities or difficulties. For instance, younger children improved their understanding of the weather by using sensory materials and sound effects to experience what a snow storm might feel like.
- All staff are committed to the use of communication approaches which are suited to the needs of each pupil. As a result, pupils feel a real sense of achievement when they master a new word, sign or use their sound buttons to answer a question or make a choice in their learning.
- Teachers mostly plan their activities well and make sure there is a strong focus on the key skills of literacy and numeracy. In a highly effective mathematics session, there was a strong focus on identifying key words and breaking these down into sounds to improve pupils' reading skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are particularly knowledgeable about the implications for learning of their pupils' disabilities and special educational needs. For example, pupils with a diagnosis of autism are prepared very carefully for a change from one activity to the next. This reduces their anxiety to enable them to settle quickly and to learn well.
- Occasionally, teaching assistants are not always sufficiently directed by the class teacher to challenge and support the needs of all pupils.
- The teaching of reading is very effective because of the expert teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) and regular daily reading practice. As a result, the most able pupils are able to read simple stories fluently, learning to read and understand a range of texts. Less able pupils learn to use symbols to help them read simple sentences and enjoy stories.
- Staff provide good verbal and written feedback to pupils on how to improve their work.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Staff listen and respond well to children, helping them to remain engaged in their learning and make good progress.
- Students in the sixth form are taught well. Many of their activities are highly effective and successfully help them to prepare for later life and the world of learning and work.
- Teaching is not outstanding because teachers do not always set work at the right level and, sometimes, do not move pupils on to new learning quickly enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During the inspection, pupils showed exemplary attitudes towards each other, staff and visitors; for example, they held doors open for the inspector without being prompted and were keen to engage in discussions about their learning.
- Close collaborative work with specialist staff ensures that pupils are taught to communicate in a way that best suits their needs so that their frustrations ease considerably over time. This has a noticeable impact on pupils' ability to manage their own behaviour. Consequently, there are no exclusions and parents confirm significant improvements in their child's behaviour.
- Excellent relationships are evident throughout the school. Some pupils have very challenging behaviour and learning needs. Staff defuse potentially difficult situations well using a variety of techniques so that physical interventions are rarely required. Pupils with complex needs are comfortable with adults who look after their intimate care needs.
- Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility through outings, residential adventure trips and work experience. This prepares them well for their future.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and they say that they can talk to any staff if they have any concerns. Pupils know about the different types of bullying because the school helps them understand what bullying is and how to deal with it. The school's work on e-safety is thorough so that pupils are made very aware of the danger of making

'friends' on social media sites, and other hazards associated with using the internet.

- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection because pupils enjoy coming to school. Where absence does occur, it mainly relates to the high medical needs of some pupils.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally, when the work set is not at the right level, pupils can become distracted and their attention wanes.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has transformed it over the past two years. She has focused on raising standards and managing behaviour consistently.
- Leaders understand the school's strengths and where improvement is still required, and is effective in using this information to develop its priority action plans. They have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and a clear plan for future improvement.
- Changes to the range of subjects and activities offered, across all key stages, have contributed to greater progress and raised standards. Leaders, including governors, rightly recognise that the school needs to offer a wider range of GCSE courses, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Middle leaders take responsibility for ensuring high standards are maintained in their areas of responsibility. As a result, all staff are motivated and committed to raising standards.
- The quality of teaching closely matches teachers' pay and the targets they are set. Regular checking of teaching by senior leaders has identified strong practice. Where teaching has been weak, this has been tackled rigorously. Effective training ensures all staff are given clear guidance on working with pupils who have complex learning, physical and medical needs. Partnerships with therapists and health staff make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils have many opportunities to join school clubs and to go on visits out of school. This enhances their communication and helps them learn new skills in a variety of situations. This makes a positive contribution to their behaviour and self-control. The development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is strong.
- Good use is also made of the primary school sport funding to provide additional training for staff, as well as funding resources and extra sports activities for pupils.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good because it promotes the learning and personal development of most students well, and offers a good range of academic and work-related opportunities.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and staff meet current requirements.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well.
- The local authority has provided highly effective support since the last inspection in reviewing key aspects of school performance. Currently, it only provides 'light touch' support.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because leaders have not yet ensured that there is a sufficiently wide range of GCSE courses to meet the needs of the most able pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved since the previous inspection. It has used the links with the local authority effectively to improve its skills through high quality training. Governors regularly visit the school in order to check for themselves the information they are given by senior leaders. This means they know the school well and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, and how the information on pupils' progress compares with similar schools nationally. Governors ensure that pay is related to teachers' performance. The headteacher's performance is similarly scrutinised, and governors ensure that her annual objectives are demanding and enable the school to move forward. All safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively. The governing body checks funding across the school and especially the additional funding the school receives. It robustly holds the senior leadership team to account for the progress of these pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116611
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	442461

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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Brooker
Headteacher	Jackie Sumner
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 September 2012
Telephone number	02392 241818
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