

Stocklake Park Community School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110581
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	378120
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	Sonja Joseph

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Angela Coneron
Headteacher	Mrs Annette Parkin
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2008
School address	Stocklake Aylesbury HP20 1DP
Telephone number	01296 423507
Fax number	01296 433353
Email address	admin@park.bucks.sch.uk

Age group	11–19
Inspection date(s)	11–12 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sonja Joseph

Additional inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 11 lessons, amounting to about three hours of teaching in total, taught by ten teachers. Learning walks comprising short visits to lessons in a range of subjects were carried out to assess the quality of behaviour and the work undertaken by specific groups of students. Approximately one third of lesson observations were conducted jointly with the deputy headteacher. Discussions took place with senior and middle leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and different groups of students. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at progress tracking and performance data, the school development plan, students' work and numerous policies, guidelines, plans and reviews. The questionnaire responses from 30 parents and carers, 53 students and 28 staff were also analysed.

Information about the school

Stocklake Community School is an average sized special school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of students from ethnic heritages other than White British is above that found nationally. A significant minority of the school population speak English as an additional language, which is higher than average. Over two thirds of students are boys. All students have statements of special educational needs. Most students have severe learning difficulties and additional speech, language and communication needs. Approximately one fifth have profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or physical disability; the same proportion of students have an autism spectrum disorder. The school has not met the government's floor targets for attainment and progress in each of the last three years.

The school is part of the Vale Federation that includes its federated primary school. It has had significant changes since the last inspection, with a restructuring of staff across both the federated special schools. The headteacher is Principal of both schools. The deputy headteacher of Stocklake Park was recently appointed and there is a new Chair of the Governing Body. It has sixth form provision which is located on a second site. The school has achieved the following national awards: Activemark, Sportsmark and Investors in People.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Stocklake Park is a good school where everyone is valued and where there is a continual drive to achieve the best for all students. As one parent, typical of many commented, 'The staff go that extra mile to help a child and their family.'
- Students' achievement is good and they enjoy their learning. They make good progress in acquiring academic skills and gain a range of qualifications. They also make good gains in acquiring life skills.
- The sixth form is good. Students report that they appreciate the good teaching and the helpful guidance available.
- The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding. Students are extremely polite and engaging. They say they feel very safe at school and their parents and carers overwhelmingly agree.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students are very reflective, they develop a keen understanding and respect for others and, through their actions, make an exceptionally strong contribution to ensuring that the school is a harmonious community.
- Stocklake Park is led by passionate senior leaders who, with energetic and motivated staff, ensure that the school runs well and students are skilfully cared for in a positive learning environment.
- The curriculum meets the needs of its wide range of students very effectively with successful partnerships across the federation and beyond.
- Teaching is good overall. Its quality, including the use of assessment, is more inconsistent than at the previous inspection. All lessons are led by enthusiastic teachers who successfully engage students in learning. Generally, teachers tune lessons to each individual student to ensure the best possible progress.
- The school collects a wide variety of assessment information on each student's progress. This information is not used to its full effectiveness by leaders, including governors, to monitor the progress of students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the analysis and reduce the wealth of assessment and monitoring information so that it:
 - informs teachers' planning consistently to ensure that in all lessons, students are making the best possible progress

- enables leaders to focus quickly on the strengths and weaknesses in the progress of students in order to help lift their overall academic achievement still further
- gives governors a clearer overview so that they can better challenge the school and support further improvements.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The school's own data show that all groups of students make equally good progress. All achieve well, regardless of their special educational needs, disabilities, ethnicity or main language spoken at home. This picture was confirmed by observations made during the inspection. Although attainment is low, all make good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy learning. The development of communication, language and independence skills is always a strong focus in learning and so students make good progress in these areas. Students throughout the school learn to communicate effectively using vocalisation or spoken word, alternative and augmentative communication systems, symbols or sign. For example, in an effective communication therapy lesson, students with profound and multiple learning difficulties were using symbolic communication systems to work collaboratively to repeat music and number patterns of increasing difficulty.

Students acquire good skills in reading relative to their starting points, for example in recognising pictures, learning rhymes and reading the most common words. They discuss their favourite authors and are successful in accredited courses in English. Students work diligently and are confident around the school. In the sixth form, students make good progress and consolidate their essential life skills such as budgeting, cooking meals and self-care. As a result, the vast majority are very successful in moving to suitable placements when they leave, having gained a range of accreditation and qualifications. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are making good progress and inspectors agree that this view is accurate.

Quality of teaching

In all lessons, strong relationships between adults and students aid learning. Sensitive support from skilled adults ensures that students understand what to do and are helped to keep on task, with any misconceptions quickly clarified and feedback readily given. Appropriate care management plans are in place for individuals and these ensure that students are supported with additional technology or software as well as providing continuity of approach to their learning. Well-planned lessons, with appropriate resources, mean that most lessons proceed at a good pace. Mostly, the expectation for individual students is made very clear at the outset, using accurate and systematic assessment of each student's prior learning. This is then followed up throughout the lesson by precise, subject-focused questioning from the teacher to maintain the appropriate level of challenge. The carefully planned curriculum, together with lesson planning that addresses individual needs, enables all students to learn well in most lessons. However, assessment information is not used consistently well to inform planning. In a few lessons, while

the whole-class activity was interesting and engaging, there was not this level of individual challenge to promote learning further. In many lessons, teachers use a range of approaches matching individual students' needs and preferred learning style, as well as encouraging them to have fun. There were many good examples of the use of practical activities and the successful linking of subjects for students, such as practising mathematical skills in physical therapy lessons and vice versa.

Communication skills are successfully developed through all lessons, with adults ensuring instructions and questions are clear, to maximise students' opportunities to respond. There are good opportunities for personal development, for example giving students time for reflection and quiet and for students to work with a partner. Reading is systematically taught, developing knowledge of sounds and letters with frequent practice as well as exposure to a range of materials such as audio books, catalogues, interactive software and the transformation of the sensory theatre to represent the setting of a particular text to capture interest.

The majority of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire agree that teaching is a strength of the school, and inspection evidence supports this view. As one parent commented, 'My son loves his school and all the staff do their utmost to help him learn. As a parent I could ask for no more.'

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour observed during the inspection was outstanding. The school's own analysis of students' behaviour in lessons, as indicated in their incidents logs, lesson monitoring and exclusion records as well as student discussions, shows that behaviour is typically outstanding. These records show excellent improvements in individual behaviour over time. In the playground, students apply the very good skills, learned in physical education lessons, of teamwork and fair play. They are extremely respectful of each other. The development of a personalised curriculum, matching students' needs, is helping to sustain the high standards of behaviour.

Students say they feel very safe at school because they are well cared for by adults who know them very well. The students with the most significant difficulties demonstrate that they trust adults, allowing themselves to be supported or cared for. Students have a very good understanding of how to stay safe in and out of school. They behave very well and have high expectations of others and encourage them to conform and engage. There are no recorded incidents of bullying or racist or homophobic behaviour. Students are extremely confident that any issues will be sorted out by adults. They can discuss how to keep themselves safe. There have been no permanent or fixed term exclusions for over four years, which is testament to the school's inclusive ethos. Students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties respond well to actions taken to improve behaviour in a specialist class. This is effective in building self-esteem and supporting reintegration into the main school for those students who may otherwise be at risk of exclusion and has led to a reduction over time in the use of physical restraint.

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are satisfied with the safety of their child and the behaviour in the school.

Leadership and management

The Principal, ably supported by the new deputy headteacher, provides very strong leadership and is committed to ensuring high-quality provision for all groups of students. Effective teamwork ensures that senior leaders' ambitions for the school are translated into systematic actions. The restructuring of responsibilities across the whole federation is enabling senior leaders to drive forward changes rapidly, based on establishing a greater focus on learning by all staff. At this stage of the transition, the pattern of improvement over time is uneven and, currently, students' achievement and the quality of teaching are not quite at the same high standard as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The school has introduced new tracking systems to measure student progress but they are not being used consistently well to inform planning of lessons and activities.

In response to weaknesses identified at the last inspection, middle leaders are now diligent and innovative in their work, ensuring that their areas of responsibility are more regularly scrutinised, with continuous improvement effected through additional training or specific interventions. Lesson observation is frequent and rigorous, and inspection findings closely reflect senior leaders' existing knowledge of the quality of teaching. Thorough systems for supporting less experienced staff and very good use of professional development and research ensure staff meet the increasingly complex needs of students. Staff leading provision for students with particular types of difficulty undertake specialist training to increase their expertise and provide valuable support to their colleagues. This concerted approach to raising the quality of teaching and learning demonstrates the strength of the school's capacity to improve further.

Governors are committed, visit the school often and, through learning walks, are knowledgeable about the school. Although self-evaluation is accurate, the process of scrutinising the wealth of assessment information available is time-consuming. This information is not synthesised sufficiently to ensure that governors can confidently hold the school to account or that its leaders can quickly identify areas of underachievement. The school has continued to develop its provision for the wide range of students, particularly the rebound therapy centre and well-developed plans for the sensory garden.

Leaders and managers have developed effective partnerships, in particular with health professionals, to ensure that students' speech and language and physiotherapy needs are effectively met throughout the day. The school has good procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and acts swiftly to address any areas for improvement. The school works well to tackle discrimination and the successful promotion of equality is evident in the way in which all students work happily together.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and has been restructured to ensure that it offers a wide range of community, cultural and reflective activities, to which its students respond well. Such experiences greatly assist students in making transitions when they leave school. All students have personalised pathways across all key stages, and there is a good range of enrichment activities. In addition, strong links

with local schools means that the curriculum is very effectively enhanced, for example through the joint planning and delivery of science and international day activities. The curriculum promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely effectively. It is at the heart of the school's ethos and is a key factor underpinning students' good learning and progress.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Stocklake Park Community School, Aylesbury HP20 1DP

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed it a lot. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

Your school is a good school. When we spoke to you and in your replies to the questionnaires, you told us you are happy because you feel safe and well looked after. We found that your behaviour is outstanding. You enjoy learning because teaching is good and you get good support to help you learn. All the leaders in your school work hard to run the school well.

To make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to make sure that the information they collect on your progress is used even better in all lessons to help you learn more and help the school decide what improvements to make. You can help by continuing to work hard.

I know that everyone is very proud of the things you have achieved in school. Well done. It was a privilege to meet you all.

Yours sincerely

Sonja Joseph
Lead inspector

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