

Ravenswood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109407
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	356534
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen McShane

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	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Griggs
Headteacher	Philippa Clark
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. They observed 19 lessons, taught by 14 different teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at evidence of pupils' work, and scrutinised the assessment information the school has collected on pupils' progress. The 40 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were examined by the inspection team, along with staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- The learning and progress of groups of pupils with differing levels of need.
- How effectively the recent reorganisation of the curriculum and provision has ensured that they are meeting the needs of all groups of pupils.
- The rigour and effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures in ensuring that any underachievement is quickly picked up and leaders and managers take timely action.

Information about the school

All pupils have moderate or severe learning difficulties. Just over a third have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. Many pupils have complex needs related to speech, language, communication, behaviour, mental health or medical conditions. The large majority live in North Somerset with a small minority travelling from neighbouring authorities. The very large majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. The school is divided into three 'hubs': social communication, middle years and 14–19. It makes provision for children in Early Years Foundation Stage in one of the classes in the social communication hub. Due to the condition of the current buildings, the local authority and the school were developing plans to relocate the school; however, these have recently been put on hold.

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

Ravenswood is a good school where pupils make good progress. In lessons, they enjoy learning and are engaged. Pupils' attendance is excellent. They are polite, courteous and well behaved. Those who display challenging behaviour are making good progress as a result of skilful management and effective individual programmes, so that negative incidents are decreasing. Good progress is the result of a combination of an interesting curriculum, specialist techniques and a caring environment where pupils build up their self-esteem and feel safe to learn. Outstanding partnerships with other agencies benefit the pupils greatly.

Although teaching is good in some respects, it is satisfactory overall because it is too variable. In the best lessons, there is energy and innovation so that pupils are fully involved at all times. The teacher expertly provides different activities and resources that are well matched to each pupil so that they acquire new knowledge or practise important skills. In a minority of lessons, activities are not adequately matched to ensure consistently high challenge for all. Too long is spent talking to the whole group, which means some pupils become passive. Additional adults are used ineffectively, too often solely supporting behaviour or prompting attention rather than consistently promoting good learning.

The provision for the youngest children is currently satisfactory but is improving. Significant recent improvements have taken place to teaching, the curriculum and assessment to ensure that children make better progress, and appropriate plans are in place to develop the provision further.

High expectations from the governing body and the headteacher mean that the school has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school's self-evaluation is reflective, honest and accurate and informs school development planning well. Detailed data analysis and monitoring of progress means that any sign of potential underachievement or pupils not reaching their challenging targets is recognised quickly and the school can put in place recovery plans and additional resources. Capacity to improve is good. The school has identified that while leaders and managers have played different roles to ensure ongoing improvement, and taken robust action when necessary, the accountability of individuals is currently not sufficiently clear and too many activities remain the responsibility of the headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that by summer term 2011 it is good or better in the very large majority of lessons, by:
 - immediately clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different leaders and managers in supporting, coaching, monitoring and evaluating

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- consistently using information from pupils' assessments to ensure that lesson objectives and activities challenge all pupils to make good progress
- ensuring that support from additional adults focuses on promoting good learning.
- Improve provision for the youngest children by fully implementing plans to:
 - use assessment effectively to inform teaching
 - extend child-initiated learning
 - improve access to the outside area to maximise its use in supporting the curriculum.

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

Pupils leave the school with ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) awards for life skills and a wide range of accredited qualifications including GCSEs or entry levels in different subjects including English, mathematics, food studies and drama. The school's data show pupils are making good progress and are on track to continue this. In lessons, pupils work well and are diligent. Pupils who find concentrating very difficult give good attention to their TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped CHildren) activities and work diligently through different tasks related to developing fine motor or early literacy or numeracy skills. In other classes, pupils were, for example, observed developing new skills in core subjects, acquiring new vocabulary in French, and acquiring work-related skills of carrying out a risk assessment.

Pupils say they feel very safe when at school and are confident of the ways for reporting if this is not the case. Those pupils with few language skills or those prone to anxiety show their confidence in adults in the way they accept their support and guidance and are calm and still at different times. Pupils engage in a wide range of physical education activities very energetically and are developing a good knowledge of the need for a healthy lifestyle. Those pupils whose diets are restricted because of their autism are becoming more willing to taste and tolerate a wider range of foods.

Pupils are welcoming to visitors, accepting of each other and enjoy responsibilities around the classroom and the school, including maintaining the conservation area. The school council are clear on their views and their role, and have recently participated in reviewing the code of conduct and interviewing new members of staff. Pupils develop the skills to work well with others and ask for help when they need it. They respond well to a wide range of spiritual and cultural activities.

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

All teaching in the school is underpinned by good relationships between adults and pupils, skilful behaviour management and effective use of information and communication technology to motivate and to give an additional stimulus to the pupils. The best teaching in the school encourages active participation from the pupils planned with a clear focus on each pupil. In one lesson, pupils were learning the 'ck' sound. Activities had just the right amount of challenge; some pupils were identifying objects and naming them, some sorting words, some writing, some using a computer program with pupils identifying the sound at the beginning, middle and end of words. Support staff knew exactly the skill they were helping to develop and their feedback was precise and related to the learning objective. At the end of the short session of high activity, the majority of pupils were more confident. In a food technology lesson, all pupils were cooking their own meal. Staff had ensured that resources were well prepared and the environment was safe, and they were on hand to help. The high expectation was that pupils should be independent. This meant that pupils had to organise themselves, tackle difficulties and problem solve. They all experienced success, not only in preparing a meal but also in the skills they realised they had, one pupil proudly declaring after using the tin opener that 'I have opened the tin safely without cutting myself.'

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Teaching is satisfactory when the planned outcomes for individuals are too vague and not sufficiently based on pupils' assessment information, even though accurate data are available. The activity is then too general and too often depends on pupils listening for too long.

The school has worked hard to improve its curriculum. There is now a good sense of continuity and progression, and the planning across the school means that pupils can work with different groups or hubs if this is more appropriate. The range of accredited courses has increased and this has improved the level of challenge for pupils. The development of personal skills and other outcomes, for example keeping safe, is threaded through the curriculum so that attention can be given to these in a systematic way. In the social communication hub, structured TEACCH activities are effective in supporting the development of skills. The use of symbols is very effective in helping pupils to focus on activities and manage the anxiety of transitions through their day. A wide range of opportunities are offered such as a range of after-school clubs, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and drama projects with other schools, including a theatre performance in Bristol.

Staff know pupils well and are very supportive, caring and encouraging. There are good links with families and induction into school is well managed, including home visits when required. Individuals who may be more vulnerable because of their behaviour or their home circumstances receive targeted support which is successful. The family support adviser and the behaviour support adviser are important members of the school team to coordinate additional support for pupils and their impact is clear in high attendance and improved behaviour of individual pupils. The school has excellent links with a wide range of other professionals, including health and social care, and their support is integrated well into the life of the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's determination and hard work to improve the school, and in particular the progress of pupils, are clearly evident. With her ambitious team she has overseen the effective changes to the curriculum and organisation as well as significant improvements to the gathering and use of assessment data. Close links between the headteacher and the governing body underpin their successful working relationship. The effective governing body are business-like and make sure that their meetings focus on outcomes for pupils, regularly asking and minuting 'challenge questions' that will help the school to reflect and move forward. Highly effective partnerships make a strong contribution to the care and

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welfare of pupils and mean that pupils have a wide range of additional curriculum opportunities. The school works well with others to improve and disseminate its good practice in assessment and behaviour management. Strong and robust arrangements are in place to safeguard children. The school's work in promoting community cohesion ensures that pupils and their families get on well together and the school has good plans to promote further engagement with a variety of other communities. The school regularly audits its data and takes robust action to ensure that no group is underachieving.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

There have been recent improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, although it is too early in the term for their full impact to be seen. Teaching is now well organised and children have opportunities to participate in small group sessions, structured individual tasks and 'choosing time'. The curriculum has been revised to ensure coverage of all areas of learning. Assessment procedures have been set up so that learning is captured and recorded, but these are not yet being used effectively to ensure teaching can quickly respond to any variations in children's progress. Children are cared for well. Current areas of weakness, for example the use of the outdoor area and ensuring children have enough time to initiate their own learning, have been correctly identified and staff have a clear understanding of how to tackle them.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire are happy with their child's experience at the school and satisfied with all aspects of the provision. One summed it up by writing, 'My son is happy and I am very happy.' In the very few cases where an individual concern was raised, inspectors explored the issues with the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ravenswood 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	60	14	35	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	63	13	33	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	60	14	35	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	55	13	33	3	3	8	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	58	15	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	50	18	45	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	45	21	53	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)	20	50	12	30	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	68	11	28	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	48	18	45	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	35	22	55	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	53	17	43	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	70	9	23	2	5	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 terms 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.



30 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ravenswood School, Nailsea, BS48 2NN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting with you and enjoyed seeing all the different things you do.

We found out that:

- Ravenswood is a good school
- you are making good progress in your learning
- you work hard, your behaviour is good, and you are polite
- your attendance is excellent
- pupils who need special help with their behaviour or learning receive good support
- you do lots of interesting things
- adults care for you very well and you feel very safe
- your school is managed well and there have been many improvements recently that have made a difference.

At the moment, some lessons are good and challenge you just enough so that you learn a great deal. We have asked the school to try to make sure that all lessons are like this, all of the time, and to continue to improve the way the youngest children are taught. All of you can help by continuing to try your best.

It was a privilege to visit your school. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane

Her Majesty's Inspector

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