

Kennel Lane School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110190
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	356696
Inspection dates	17–18 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy 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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Shilcock
Headteacher	Andrea de Bunsen
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons and 14 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with staff, members of the governing body, parents and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation and policies, including the school's tracking of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and arrangements for safeguarding. They also studied pupil and staff questionnaires and the 65 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well the school uses assessment to support the progress made by all pupils, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and students in the sixth form.
- How well curricular and extra-curricular opportunities contribute to pupil and student outcomes, including laying the foundations for adult life.
- How effectively the school links with the wider community.

Information about the school

Kennel Lane is a larger than average special school for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties from moderate to profound and complex, and including autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils attending the school have a statement of special educational needs. The school, which is housed in a number of different buildings, is organised into National Curriculum key stages and includes a nursery and a sixth form. It also runs a primary inclusion class based at a local primary school and some older pupils attend local secondary schools or colleges on an individual basis. Speech and language and other therapies are available and the local authority's outreach service for autism spectrum disorder is based at the school. As the only special school within the authority, the school acts as a centre for training and advice for mainstream schools.

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

Kennel Lane School is a good school with many strengths. It provides an excellent level of care and support for its pupils. Its commitment to removing barriers and promoting equality has evident impact on pupils' growing ambition and belief in themselves. They feel very safe and valued and as a result grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Demonstrating effective self-evaluation, the school has continued to develop since the previous inspection. Its work with partner schools to provide increased inclusion opportunities for pupils and to support colleagues from other disciplines or establishments in meeting their needs is exemplary. The school's accommodation is not entirely fit for purpose and some departments are cramped. Plans to rectify this have been subject to alteration owing to changes in funding streams. This has placed pressures upon the school's senior leaders over the past couple of years. However, the senior leadership team has not been daunted by these delays. It remains greatly ambitious for the school and is very well supported by all staff; the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Overall, pupils achieve well academically and very well personally and socially. This is so in the main school as well as in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the post-16 department. The specialist provision made in the Early Years Foundation Stage is rightly appreciated by parents and carers as well as the local authority. The dedicated approach to meeting the special needs of the children in this stage is evident and impacts well on their progress. However, there is sometimes an unequal balance between attention paid to the specialist provision for the different areas of learning and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

The strong focus on social and communication-based targets is effective in improving pupils' attitudes to learning. The impact of this is sometimes lost when not matched with equal rigour by attention to what the pupils, as individuals, need to learn. Pupils can speak confidently about their social skills or behavioural targets but not all are equally secure about those that are work related. Lesson plans show that teachers know their pupils very well and good attention is paid to individual education planning by class teachers and support assistants. However, while assessment over time is strong, information on how much progress pupils make over a shorter period is not used as effectively as it could be to plan and deliver lessons. There is sometimes an overemphasis on the general areas and tasks that pupils are going to cover, rather than the precise learning points and skills that they need to master. As a result, opportunities to stretch pupils to make the best possible gains in their learning are sometimes missed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support pupils in making the best possible progress in all areas of their learning by:

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- ensuring that all teachers consistently make full use of short as well as longer term assessment to plan and match their lessons to the learning needs of each pupil
- ensuring that lessons are consistently based upon clear objectives which show the precise learning points and skills that pupils need to master rather than the general areas or tasks that they are going to cover
- ensuring that pupils understand what the next steps in their learning are maintaining a consistent balance between the positive aspects of the specialist provision and the more general aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

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

Achievement overall is good. Pupils generally make good progress, and some make outstanding progress, through the P levels and the early levels of the National Curriculum. Older students successfully work towards Entry Level certificates which last year were all at Levels 2 and 3; Year 14 students gain a range of units through the Unit Award Scheme. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children also make good progress in their learning. Progress against long-term targets is tracked in careful detail by the senior leadership team. As a result of this careful evaluation, initiatives to accelerate the progress for any groups seen to be falling behind show good impact. For example, students with dyslexia, identified as making less progress than other groups, are showing noticeable progress as a result of successful intervention. A focus on early reading has also made a difference to a wider group of learners. Pupils who enjoyed reading *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* showed mastery of early phonic work (knowledge of the sounds that letters make). Where the school's analysis has shown a slight imbalance between the progress made by boys and girls, it has taken swift and effective action to address this and three girls clearly enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a lesson designed particularly for them. Post-16 students make good progress, both in their learning and in the development of their personal and social skills.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and any long-term absence is usually as a result of medical needs or illness. Although some pupils find always behaving well difficult, behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school. Where necessary, individual pupils respond very well to the school's efforts to make sure they understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils are tolerant and very supportive of one another. They have trust in the adults working with them to manage behaviour well so that they feel very safe. They are aware that there might be bullying but are clear about what would be done to deal with it. Because all aspects of healthy living, including issues of sexual health, are dealt with extremely sensitively, pupils are able to take these on at a pace that suits them with very positive effect. During a sociable lunchtime, one girl explained carefully how she was choosing the right balance of foods in order to reach a healthy weight.

As they move through the school, pupils develop work-related skills well through an appropriate focus on the key areas of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils benefit greatly from the opportunities they have to contribute to the life of both their own and other schools. For example, one girl proudly became 'star of the week' for acting as a playground buddy in her host primary school. The elected school council members make an extremely positive contribution in

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representing other students' views and are currently very involved in discussions about whether a change in uniform would be a good idea or not. Pupils respond very well to whole-school events, such as the multicultural and musical activities which took place during the inspection. These enable participants to develop both socially and spiritually as they experience the joy of coming together to achieve something new.

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	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

The school has responded well to an area for improvement raised in the last inspection, which was to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3. As a result, the quality of teaching is more consistent across the school. Teachers plan interesting activities so that lessons generally move at a good pace and engage pupils well. There is sometimes an overemphasis on lessons that will interest pupils, where it is not always clear what the learning objective is. Where appropriate, good use is made of visual timetables and symbols to ensure that students know what they are going to do and to support them in taking responsibility for moving independently from one task to another. Pupils benefit from the very good relationships that exist between them, the teaching and support staff. Staff know pupils very well but sometimes too much reliance is placed upon this, rather than focused planning and evaluation, to assess how well pupils are doing in lessons.

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Staff cope well with the relatively cramped premises of the school in order to deliver a curriculum that is well matched to its pupil population. In Key Stages 1 and 2 a two-year rolling programme enables pupils to experience a broad range of topics. Those in Key Stage 3 build upon this in a three-year programme which covers the subject areas of the National Curriculum well. Students in Key Stage 4 are appropriately guided towards Entry Level accreditation or that provided by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Shared arrangements with teachers from a neighbouring secondary school ensure that the students involved have a good opportunity to work and gain accreditation in mathematics and science. Where necessary, the school makes good individually tailored arrangements for students to gain accreditation beyond this level. However, the range of accreditation available for vocational areas could usefully be extended still further.

The programme of study designed for pupils who require access to a multi-sensory curriculum is typical of the school's efforts to match curriculum and resources to needs as effectively as possible. It is rightly seeking ways to ensure that these resources are used more widely across the school in order to enhance delivery of the curriculum for all.

There are excellent arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils. A strong commitment to working with a range of agencies to the benefit of every pupil is evident. Transition for those joining the school is very well planned and careful preparation for those who are due to leave supports them extremely well. Parents provided many examples of when the school has supported them and their families, with comments such as, 'The sympathy, professionalism and care for my daughter and myself are second to none.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

The school's very strong commitment to equality of opportunity is summed up in its headline statement, 'Equality is about treating people differently'. Its drive to champion the cause of all its pupils is evident in the very effective way in which it has broadened links and opportunities with mainstream providers. Realistic self-evaluation involving both staff and pupils has helped senior leaders to prioritise areas for development very well and their continuing ambition for the school is evident. The school provides very good opportunities for professional development and training and has effectively established a staffing structure which includes leadership roles for support staff as well as teachers. Although some recent changes in the leadership and management of teaching are taking a little time to become established, they are representative of the decisive steps taken by

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senior leaders to continue to move the school forward. Despite the limitations of the school's buildings and disappointments over changes in plans to improve them, morale among the staff is very high and all concerned are convinced that even more can be achieved. The notion of 'careful risk' is fundamental to the school's approach. Within this, arrangements for safeguarding are very strong, with well-developed systems in place to involve key agencies. The school's work in this area was recognised by an invitation to join the local authority's safeguarding scrutiny panel. Staff's commitment to maintaining a high level of communication with parents and carers is evident and appreciated.

The governing body, which has a good balance of new and experienced members, has a clear understanding of its role. Governors are aware that they now need to evaluate the impact of the school's recent work within the community in order to plan most effectively for the next steps. The school is an increasingly significant player within its locality. It is well placed to make an even greater contribution as some plans for enhanced accommodation become reality and the school moves onto the next phase of its development.

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	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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress. They show that they feel secure in their environment and thoroughly enjoy their early experiences of school. Routines for dealing with the mix of learning and therapy needs are well established and children form good relationships with all the staff. Children respond well to each other's company and from an early age begin to develop a tolerance of one another's differences. The leadership and management of this phase are good and, despite limited space, the Early Years Foundation Stage area of the school provides a well-planned environment for learning. Due to the strong focus on meeting the special

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educational needs of the children, opportunities for them to explore and learn independently are sometimes missed.

The school provides good opportunities for children to join others in a neighbouring school as and when they are ready. Here they benefit from access to indoor and outdoor learning and a mix of child-initiated and adult-led activities which is more limited in their current environment. Effective use of one-to-one support ensures good access to the activities provided on site, and good quality planning, tailored to the needs of each child, is supported well by observations of progress made in very small steps. Ways of recording their progress deviate to some extent from the usual approaches expected in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

Achievement for students in the post-16 provision is good. Some breaks in continuity of leadership and management have been well managed so that the school's ambitions for its students remain unaffected. Staff support students well so that they develop sensible attitudes and become increasingly mature in their work habits. The positive development of the students' social skills is evident in their attitudes to school and in their activities in the local community. Teaching is good and support staff play an important role in encouraging students' independence. Curriculum provision is well planned and students gain awards through ASDAN and other bodies. These enable students to demonstrate their progress in key skills and life skills as well as more academic subjects. Students act as very good ambassadors for the school, particularly when they provide hospitality at events such as parent open afternoons, the garden open day and special assemblies. They undertake work experience of varying types and benefit from placements at specialist providers, such as a regional agricultural college. Opportunities like this help them to decide what they might like to do in the future and prepare them well for leaving school.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The high level of satisfaction felt by most parents and carers, and their appreciation of the work of the school was reflected in the comments made both by those who were spoken to and those who replied to the questionnaire. The very large majority echoed the view formed by inspectors that this is a school that works hard to involve, include and keep parents and carers informed. Some would like to have more information, though, on how well their children are doing in their school work. Nevertheless, the following comments represent the views of many: 'I trust them when my child is in their care' and 'We are very pleased with the progress our son has made both academically and socially.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kennel Lane 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	65	21	32	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	45	69	18	28	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	69	15	23	3	5	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	52	25	38	5	8	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	40	62	21	32	3	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	54	20	31	6	9	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	52	25	38	2	3	1	2
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)	30	46	28	43	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	63	21	32	2	3	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	49	26	40	4	6	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	46	29	45	2	3	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	35	54	24	37	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	69	16	25	3	5	1	2

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



21 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kennel Lane School, Bracknell RG42 2EX

Thank you for helping us to learn about your school. We really enjoyed our visit. It was good to meet so many of you and to see how well you are doing. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found.

Kennel Lane School is a good school which helps you to make good progress in your learning. You all seem to enjoy school. You are safe and very well cared for and this helps you to grow into mature young people. The school works very hard to make sure that you get any help you or your family might need. There are many interesting things for you to do in and out of school and those of you who also go to other schools or colleges clearly enjoy this. It was good to see that so many of you take part in activities and musical events like the ones that were taking place when we visited you. I enjoyed meeting the school council and hearing about some of the things that they are planning. Some of you are very good cooks and we really liked the biscuits made by the older students. Thank you!

All the staff work hard to help you and they all want you to do well. It is important that everyone who works with you helps you to make as much progress as you can in many different ways. Although your school does not have as much space as you would like, we have asked your headteacher and the staff to try to find more ways for you to learn even more than you do now. For the youngest children, we have asked staff to make sure that you have every opportunity to learn outside as well as inside the classroom and that they keep a clear record of how well you are doing during your time in the Nursery.

I am sure that you will all try your best and I hope that you will do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy Her Majesty's Inspector

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