

Sherwood Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103025
Local Authority	
Inspection number	343743
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Kay Charlton

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mavis Peart
Headteacher	Ann Nanasi
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2009
School address	Streeters Lane Wallington Surrey SM6 7NP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons were observed, covering all teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors, and the school improvement partner. The inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, teachers' planning, assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings and 31 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

How well teaching challenges all pupils in the light of the increasing complexity of needs in the pupil population.

The success of the curriculum in meeting pupils' individual needs.

How well school leaders, particularly the recently formed senior leadership team, are driving school improvement.

The effectiveness of the school's policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and community cohesion.

Information about the school

Sherwood Park is a special school catering for pupils with a wide range of needs from severe learning difficulties to profound and multiple learning difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs. The complexity of pupils' needs has increased over time and there is a significant proportion with very specialist needs. Pupils come from a wide geographic area covering the whole of the London Borough of Sutton and sometimes beyond that. They are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with the greatest proportion from White British backgrounds. A small minority are at the early stages of the acquisition of English. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Foundation class. Most of the older pupils attend until they are 19 years of age, either in the transition classes or in the further education class. The school has a number of awards, including Active and Sports Mark, Healthy Schools and Sustainable Schools status. At the last inspection, the school was given a notice to improve. A new headteacher took up post in January 2010 and there is a recently formed senior leadership team.

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

Main findings

Sherwood Park provides a good standard of education for its pupils. It has made great improvements since the last inspection and in accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that Sherwood Park School no longer requires significant improvement.

The school has developed new strengths. The most evident is the outstanding care, guidance and support the pupils receive and the excellent practice in relation to safeguarding. As a result, the pupils say that they feel extremely safe. Governance is much improved. Governors now monitor policies carefully and work closely with senior staff to ensure all statutory requirements are met, particularly with regard to ensuring that safeguarding and community cohesion are effective.

Pupils of all ages, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the sixth form and those with the most complex needs, achieve well because of good teaching. Staff assess pupils' learning accurately and they are more alert to ways in which they can encourage the pupils' independence. Generally, staff expectations are high and they fine-tune their questions to good effect. Even so, there is a minority of lessons where they do not make best use of the planned learning outcomes to challenge pupils with very differing abilities to achieve all that they can and this restricts progress. Behaviour throughout the school is good, with pupils showing significant improvement from when they first started school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and pupils make an excellent contribution to both the school and to the wider community.

The school has brought about improvement through the positive way in which senior leaders and governors set out their ambitious vision for the school and tackle areas which need improvement. The recently formed senior leadership team has a very good balance of skills and experience and a strong determination to improve even further. This team is rigorous in monitoring the quality of provision and ensures that all staff are fully involved in the school's self-review process so that there is clarity about strengths and also relative weaknesses. The school improvement plan recognises the need to make further improvements in developing staff expertise so that all are able to meet their responsibilities with confidence. It highlights the importance of extending the role of subject leaders. This is because they are not yet monitoring the progress that pupils make in a sufficiently systematic way for them to be certain that all are achieving as well as they can. The school's excellent partnerships with others, including parents, other schools and agencies, bring significant benefits to the pupils. These and the school's very strong focus on ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, however complex their needs, are important factors underpinning the school's strong capacity to sustain further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can by:
 - making sure that staff make best use of the planned learning outcomes in all lessons so that they fully challenge pupils of very differing abilities
 - making sure that subject leaders are systematic in the way in which they monitor and make use of information about pupils' progress in their subjects across the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress from their differing starting points. All groups, including those who are at the early stages of acquisition of English, make good progress. Pupils enjoy learning. They are prepared to persevere and are appreciative of the success of others. In an outstanding literacy lesson in one of the younger classes, pupils achieved exceptionally well because of the focus given by staff to ensuring each pupil reached the planning learning outcomes. The ways in which staff engaged the pupils in understanding what they needed to do to be successful were very impressive. This high quality practice is not, however, evident in all lessons.

Pupils take part enthusiastically in the wide range of physical activities on offer, for example football, basketball, swimming, horse riding and outdoor activities. The Active mark, Sports mark and Healthy Schools awards recognise this. Pupils enjoy the school meals and are increasingly aware of the importance of making healthy choices in their diets. They treat each other with consideration and kindness and have a very good appreciation of what is right and wrong. They readily turn to adults when in need of support and have the confidence to communicate their views. All show excellent awareness of others' feelings during quiet moments of reflection. They make an extremely strong contribution to the school community, for example through the school council and recycling projects. Through the school's wide-ranging links, pupils make an excellent contribution to the local community. Their work in helping the elderly is just one successful element of this. For most pupils, attendance is good, although the overall rate is affected by the medical needs of a few. Pupils' good academic skills and their very strong personal skills prepare them well for life after school and all move on successfully to the next stage of their education.

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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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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:	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	
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?

School leaders have successfully focused on improving teaching and assessment since the last inspection and there is good practice in all areas of the school. Teachers now use a range of tracking and progress information to good effect when planning. As a result, the learning outcomes identified for individual pupils are well matched to their needs. Teachers and support staff work very well as teams, with routines clearly established. They use resources and different communication strategies very effectively to motivate pupils. Where staff give ongoing reminders to pupils about the intended outcomes, they ensure that whatever their ability, pupils make good progress. In a few lessons, however, opportunities to challenge pupils to the full in this way are missed.

The good curriculum, including a very wide range of enrichment activities, notably in sport and in the arts, is a key factor in pupils' enjoyment of school. The development of life skills and building pupils' self-esteem and independence have a high priority and, overall, the curriculum meets pupils' individual needs well. It is suitably being reviewed to meet the more complex needs of pupils joining the school, with further work planned particularly in the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

Based on excellent relationships between staff and pupils, the care that pupils receive is outstanding. The very strong links established with parents and carers help ensure a

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continuation of this best practice at home. Pupils' very active participation in their annual reviews, using an ICT presentation, is a recent improvement that is very effective in ensuring parents and carers are fully informed of their children's progress. The school works extremely well with a wide range of agencies, including health professionals, voluntary groups and careers advisers, to ensure that the care, support and guidance given to the pupils are exemplary. The school is particularly effective in encouraging pupils' personal development and in improving behaviour.

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?

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders show an extremely strong and effective commitment to equality of opportunity for all within a safe and secure environment. The school is highly inclusive, with a focus on promoting pupils' independence, and is effective in eliminating discrimination. The senior leadership team has developed effective monitoring techniques and a rigorous strategy for improvement and this is effectively driving the school's direction. A number of subject coordinator posts have recently been changed to make best use of staff's skills and expertise. Well thought out plans are in place to ensure that these staff have a greater impact in improving pupils' progress. Support staff are benefitting greatly from their inclusion in performance management. They are rising to the challenges of their revised responsibilities, for example as a Team-Teach trainer.

The robust child protection policy is understood and implemented extremely effectively by all staff. Safeguarding records are meticulous and school leaders and governors have been very well trained in all aspects of ensuring pupils' safety. Risk assessment is extremely secure and comprehensive, ranging from arrangements for the start and end of the school day to covering the risks of the many trips out and visitors in. As a result of its high quality practice, the school now gives advice to others, acting as a model of strong practice on safeguarding procedures.

Governors have improved their way of working since the last inspection as a result of a very good level of training. They provide good support and challenge to school leaders and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Their more focused programme of 'hands-on' monitoring is ensuring that they are well informed. Governors and staff have undertaken a thorough audit of community cohesion. This is promoted well, particularly in respect of the school and local community. The school is extending the ways it works with others in an international context.

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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	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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision is well thought through to match children's needs. Consequently, children make good progress, particularly in their development of communication and personal and social skills. The indoor environment, laid out to promote all of the areas of learning for children of this age, is richly resourced. It raises children's curiosity and promotes their all-round development very well. The outdoor environment, although generally good, is rightly being adapted so that the activities are more appropriate for children with a greater complexity of need.

Staff work very effectively as a team and carefully assess the children's progress and use assessments in their planning. Adult-directed activities are structured well and significantly enhance the provision. Good opportunities are provided for children to run with their particular interests. As in the main school, there is some outstanding teaching but sometimes staff miss opportunities to challenge children fully in their learning. This is rightly a key area highlighted by the school for improvement. Leaders and managers are constantly successfully reflecting on practice and managing change very well to the benefit of the children. Relationships are excellent and the way that children are cared for is second to none. Very strong partnerships are established with parents, carers and external agencies.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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

Sixth form

Students of all abilities make good progress and, with particular reference to their needs, are very effectively prepared for life after school. The well thought out provision is focused very effectively on equipping students with the day-to-day skills, such as cooking, organising daily routines and learning to travel independently. Excellent links with others provide wide-ranging opportunities for students to gain confidence in meeting new people and going to different places. Students learn about the options available to them, through college courses and in the world of work. In addition to gaining a range of relevant accreditation, students develop the ability to make informed choices. 'Sleep-overs' in school and residential opportunities demonstrate how well students develop their skills for life and also indicate the very high level of care that staff provide. The insightful leader is clear about wanting continuing improvement. The school has identified that the planned learning outcomes are not always used as well as they might be to challenge all students and is actively addressing this issue, with clear signs of success.

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

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires were received from just under half of parents and carers. These were supplemented by the school's own questionnaires. Comments show that parents and carers are overwhelmingly happy with the provision. They indicate that their children enjoy school and feel very safe. A parent of one girl wrote, 'My child loves attending Sherwood Park. She asks to go to school in the holidays and at weekends.' The inspection

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findings mirror these very positive views. Meetings held in school to help parents support their children at home are proving increasingly popular.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sherwood Park 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 74 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	77	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	74	8	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	55	12	39	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	52	13	42	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	015	48	14	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	45	14	45	3	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	52	15	48	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)	17	55	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	58	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	52	8	26	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	45	13	42	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	45	16	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	61	12	39	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 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.



14 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sherwood Park School, Wallington SM6 7NP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. There are big improvements since the last inspection.

Sherwood Park gives you a good education where you do well because of the good teaching. Staff care for you extremely well and help you to improve your behaviour. By the time you leave, you gain a range of qualifications that can help you get a place at college. We could see that you are gaining confidence and improving in many ways. The staff have high expectations of you and we could see that you try hard. All staff work extremely hard to make sure you are safe and well cared for. You are given a very interesting range of things to do, such as going to the New Forest on the recent residential visit. This sounded great!

The staff are very keen to do their best for you and to develop the school even further. We have asked them to keep reminding you about the planned learning outcomes of lessons in as many ways as possible to help you all achieve your best. Also, we have asked the subject teachers to check the progress you make even more regularly throughout the year. This is so that they can be sure that right across the school you all do as well as you possibly can.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector

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