

# Ravensbourne School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102364
<b>Local Authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	355178
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Kauffman

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pamela Coles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Cameron
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Neave Crescent Romford RM3 8HN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 341800
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons involving 30 teachers and teaching assistants were seen. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, parents, school staff, nursing staff, the school's School Improvement Partner and managers across the school. They observed the school's work, and looked at relevant documentation including assessment and safeguarding as well as analysing the 20 parent questionnaires returned.

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

- The improvement in the effectiveness of teaching assistants since the previous inspection.
- How well is performance management and continuing professional development supporting weaker teachers?
- Whether new procedures put in place by the school are having a positive impact on the quality of behaviour management.
- Whether there is any inconsistency in the support of external agencies and partnerships and how it may have an impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- How are leaders and managers driving improvement and influencing the school's ambition through trying to gain specialist status?

## Information about the school

Ravensbourne provides education for students with an increasingly wide range of very complex needs. All pupils have severe or profound learning difficulties. The school has extended its provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum. Ravensbourne's post-16 provision has two discrete groups and students are accepted from other schools. The Early Years Foundation Stage is under new management and has five pupils at present. All students require greater support than is readily available in mainstream school although some pupils do reintegrate into mainstream when appropriate. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Over 25% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and boys outnumber girls. A higher than average proportion of pupils are looked-after children. Most pupils are bussed to school.

**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**

**1**

## Main findings

Ravensbourne is a good school. Pupils' independence, self-esteem and academic progress are central to all the school's work. Equality of opportunity is strong; for example through the development work on access to rooms across the school. Very effective use of photography and video to capture small but significant progress for the more vulnerable pupils leads parents to have absolute trust and appreciation of the work of the school. ♦ One parent reported, 'My daughter is so very happy at Ravensbourne and excitedly waits for her bus to school everyday ♦ she knows when she goes to school she will be happy, safe and learning new things everyday.'

A very effective staff team takes individual responsibility at all levels. The strong leadership and governance of the school are well established. Senior leaders have increased pupils' achievement through meticulous use of national and school data. They have also improved pupils' life skills and have shown sensitivity to the issues for many of the more challenging pupils. However on just a few occasions, teachers are not using this information as sharply as they could to help pupils identify their next steps in learning. The excellent home-school liaison via the link books and the school's liaison teacher enable staff to explore ideas and strategies with parents to support the whole family. A parent wrote, 'Having a child with autism is all about trust. I have implicit trust in all the staff at my school. They take care of both my daughter and me, informing, helping, keeping us safe and secure.'

The dedicated leadership of the headteacher and senior managers has given support staff specific responsibility to train and support other staff, for example in grounds week and in manual handling techniques. Teaching assistants at different grades explained how empowered they feel. Training of teaching assistants was an issue in the previous report. Class observation and discussion with teaching assistants and the higher level teaching assistant, illustrated the significant improvement in the training and deployment of all support staff. The development plan shows a strategic approach to issues identified through whole-school evaluation. This structured school improvement involving all stakeholders, teamed with a passion for learning, the exceptional integration of technology, the drive to gain specialist status and a realistic honest evaluation of future challenges, gives the school outstanding capacity to improve.

This term has brought new challenges, in particular the reduction in some specialist services for pupils. The school is working closely with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure that the best provision possible is available. Staff have been moved across key stages enabling them to successfully strengthen their skills and understanding of pupils' developmental needs and personal learning. Pupils have a confidence in staff as their advocates and understand they are safe. Behaviour

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management is a constant challenge for many pupils and staff. Vigilant observations, discerning risk assessment, parental links and positive specialist classes for pupils with challenging behaviour have made significant improvements for everyone's safety and learning. Safeguarding procedures are secure and effective because of the watchful attitude of all staff. ♦ While attendance is satisfactory, a small number of pupils do not attend regularly despite the school's best efforts to engage their families.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop community partnerships in order to strengthen the range of specialist services and experiences available to pupils and thus strengthen the specialist school bid with a deadline of 2011/12.
- Improve pupils' attendance by rigorously monitoring and evaluating strategies to ensure the most effective strategies are used.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment when they join the school is low. It remains so throughout their schooling because of pupils' varied, severe and complex learning difficulties. Individual pupils and groups of pupils, including those with autism, boys and girls and those from ethnic minority groups, all achieve well. However, the achievement of pupils with severe special needs is outstanding, accelerated by teachers' dynamic use of technology and sensory opportunities for communication and movement. All pupils make good and some make excellent progress from their starting points. Teachers use national and school data carefully to track when pupils exceed their targets or when they are falling below expectation. Motivating work and individual tailor-made ♦ learning programmes, planned by staff, challenge all learners. At a tea party with pupils, responses to questions showed how pupils love learning. They are encouraged to try out new learning experiences, for example, when seen in music playing the drums. At first, pupils were shy but their shyness quickly melted away as they realised what good rhythms they could make and the lesson ended with one boy confident enough to demonstrate to the others. Parents were amazed at this achievement. Looked-after children and ethnic minority pupils are well supported through the school's tracking system and an outstanding curriculum that matches the needs of all pupils. ♦

Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. Repetition of good hygiene habits and many opportunities to make healthy food choices ensure pupils learn routines and develop effective life skills. Swimming presents a freedom to learning which inspired early years pupils with very limited mobility to have fun in the water. There were squeals of delight when they understood new concepts such as floating. Pupils receive dedicated support and care; they have confidence in the staff to keep them safe. ♦ Community involvement is restricted by the pupils' special needs although there are many opportunities through the curriculum to explore the school and local community, for example, by taking part in charity events. Understanding of workplace skills is offered within the curriculum. Effective relationships with local companies and Connexions careers service enable pupils and their parents and carers to sample the world of work. A small minority of pupils and their parents attend. Staff have worked hard to improve pupil and family understanding of the importance of

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regular attendance. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences are interwoven into the curriculum but there is no audit to identify where there may be gaps in skills and understanding.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Teaching and learning are good with some significant examples of outstanding teaching, for example in physical education and Key Stage 4 history. An action-packed and vibrant approach to many lessons offers opportunities for pupils to become personally involved in the practical aspect of their learning. Pupils are proud of their achievements and this in turn improves their performance. Resources are well planned. Lively lesson objectives are clearly followed for each pupil. Good lessons are well planned. Relationships are strong. Seamless work between the majority of teachers and their support staff enables pupils to meet their full potential. Consistent use of the school's behaviour management policies ensures clear expectations that help most pupils to be aware of the impact of their behaviour on others.

The outstanding use of assessment by staff, parents and governors highlights where targeted intervention is needed to meet pupils' needs.

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The curriculum is imaginative and is particularly effective in offering a wide range of experiences to support and develop pupils' life skills. It is a strength of the school. The new team of curriculum leaders has built on the previous, effective curriculum and taken it to a new level. The school is involved in several additional projects and activities. For example, a pilot plan linking geography and science has led the way for other subjects to seize the opportunity to make the curriculum fun and exciting and to provide rich opportunities for building self-esteem and independence. Partnerships aid enrichment through many visits and links to other institutions. This further extends learners and prepares them well for the next stage of their lives.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are a feature of the school that received considerable praise from the parents and carers. There is a named person for child protection, with appropriate training. Pupils are rarely able to express concerns, but staff are highly sensitive to any signs of abuse and follow procedures rigorously. Procedures for looked-after children are excellent with close monitoring of their well-being and progress. Risk assessments cover all areas for both the premises and pupils. Any risk to pupils is minimised by very high staffing levels. Excellent examples of signing, picture exchange communication and sensory opportunities, such as the sound beam, are readily shared with parents and carers. The aim is to ensure work in the school can be pursued at home. The school's health staff give excellent service to the school, parents and carers. The school works tirelessly to ensure that partnerships with other services provide the best possible support to ensure pupils' well-being. The school has tried to establish in-house training to compensate for the recent reduction in some available specialist support. Lead staff have developed a very effective partnership with the community health team. This ensures the best possible support for the most vulnerable pupils. A group has recently been set up to address the needs of a group of parents of African heritage, where fathers particularly are welcoming support from the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Clearly focused, leaders and managers guide the school's progress and improvement. The headteacher inspires leaders and managers; together they ensure a strong and effective vision where priorities are openly shared with all stakeholders. Effective monitoring of teaching, learning and staff welfare has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching over recent years. Training opportunities are provided for all staff to address individual and school needs. Leadership of the curriculum is determined, dynamic and moving forward the school's bid for specialist status.

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School self-evaluation is incisive. It has informed the compilation of an efficient action plan in partnership with governors who have raised issues which have led to action being taken to make improvements. Governors' involvement and support in the school is significant: the governing body is kept well informed by school leaders.

Parents value the school greatly. Although the school has a highly positive relationship with most parents and carers it has rightly identified this as an area to develop as the school community continues to change. A lead member of staff has been appointed to drive this aspect of the school's work. Nursing care is exceptional. The headteacher is active in the local schools' group and has gained additional deprivation funding for the school. As a result, improved opportunities and provision for all pupils has been achieved by placing the most challenging pupils in separate provision for most of their curriculum. Excellent equality of opportunity is central to the school's policies and procedures, sometimes using positive discrimination to improve the education for all. Staff training to meet the needs of all pupils is excellent.

Safeguarding overall is good. Appropriate policies are in place, regularly reviewed and ensure good practice. Reports to the governing body are comprehensive and provide good information. The school's provision for community cohesion is effective at school and local level. An audit has been undertaken and plans are being put in place. Financial planning is strong. The governing body plays an outstanding role in monitoring spending and budget plans.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in all areas. New management since September 2010 has introduced improvements in assessing the skills of children and this, together with the close tracking of children's progress, is clear and



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effective. Teaching is good with moments of flair which often lead to a leap in learning, as children did in recognising farm animals and animal sounds.

Children are confident in making choices. Staff make good use of photography and daily discussions to ensure children's small steps of progress are celebrated. These are annotated to help parents understand their children's progress.

Children thrive in the good, stimulating indoor and outdoor play areas. The staff team is well deployed to ensure each child receives the best targeted support. The broad and well-planned curriculum builds on family and home experiences. There is a clear parent brochure that meets requirements. Self-evaluation and review is at an early stage because new management is still identifying what the setting needs to do to improve. Welfare requirements including safeguarding are met well. Leaders and managers have good, clear expectations for the future and are eager for and committed to improvement.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Outcomes for students are good. They make good progress in achieving accreditation in appropriate examinations. They make slow progress in core skills but progress in developing independence and managing their own behaviour is outstanding. Students are eager to come into school and parents and carers are rightly delighted with how well they are doing. Students with a wide range of needs enjoy the interesting and appropriate range of experiences both in school and in the community from local shops to a major art gallery.

Due to the excellent opportunities and ethos in the sixth form, students begin to learn about living healthy lifestyles and looking after their own safety and well-being. The curriculum is outstanding. The ethos in the sixth form is very effective in helping students develop maturity and preparedness for their future lives.

Teaching is good, with well-planned lessons targeted to meet individual need. This ensures that the great majority of pupils make good progress in their independence and behaviour. Teachers have a very good understanding of individual preferences and learning styles. Students' challenging behaviour can sometimes disrupt lessons but staff have an excellent understanding of pupils' needs. Curriculum and lesson plans are modified to suit circumstances. Leadership in the sixth form is good. The sixth form leader has a good grasp of the strengths of the provision and has a clear plan for developing the provision further.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

The 20 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. There were no negative comments from parents and carers about the school but there were some concerns about the lack of some external services such as speech therapy. Evidence from the inspection indicates the school is trying to rectify these concerns. The home-school liaison and parent training are new to the school and parents and carers are enjoying the opportunity and support they receive.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ravensbourne 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 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 80 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	70	5	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	80	3	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	70	5	25	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)	12	60	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	80	3	15	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	90	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	90	2	10	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



17 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ravensbourne School, Harold Hill, Romford RM3 8HN**

We would like to thank you for making us so welcome to your school recently. In particular we enjoyed visiting your classrooms including the early years and sixth form centres and seeing you all hard at work. It was especially good to talk to some of you at our tea party on Tuesday and meet a few of your parents and carers in the parents' room.

We agree with your parents and carers that Ravensbourne is a good school with many excellent aspects that help you to learn so effectively. While we were at school we noticed two areas that we would like your staff to work on to make your learning even better than at present:

- Encouraging more external partners to be involved in the school to help the school achieve its bid for specialist status.
- Encouraging you to attend more frequently.

You can help too by continuing to work hard.

Wishing you all a successful school year.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Kauffman

Lead inspector

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