

Sherbourne Fields School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103760
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	376960
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Alan Dobbins

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Hughes and Jayne McNulty
Headteacher	David Southeard
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2008
School address	Rowington Close Coventry CV6 1PS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed, in part or in full, 13 lessons taught by 13 of the school's 16 class teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of the school's Governing Council and the Chair of the Federated Governing Body, staff, groups of pupils and spoke with the school's education improvement adviser. Inspectors looked at policies and reviewed documents and the data the school has on pupils' progress. They scrutinised 23 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The progress of pupils with different causes and levels of special educational needs against relevant national guidelines and comparative data.
- How well teachers' planning meets the wide range of pupils' capabilities and their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders in improving the school.

Information about the school

Sherbourne Fields is an average-sized special school designated for pupils with physical disabilities. Increasingly, pupils are entering the school with more complex difficulties that include behavioural and social difficulties and autism. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are more boys than girls. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school entered into a hard federation arrangement with two nearby special schools in January 2009. This means that there is a Federated Governing Body, with responsibilities for all three schools, and a Governing Council, with specific responsibility for Sherbourne Fields. The school holds the Achievement for All award.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Sherbourne Fields is an outstanding school. Pupils flourish as learners, and are prepared outstandingly well to be as independent as possible for the next stage of their education and their future lives. Parents and carers are quick to praise the school. One said that the school is 'a fantastic school' because, since being at school, her son has 'made huge progress in his lifestyle and abilities.'

Throughout the school, from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the sixth form, pupils make outstanding progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, in improving their communication and in developing their personal and social skills. This shows in many ways: in their better progress against national expectations for equivalent children; in the outstanding way they behave; in the respect they show for their friends and the adults in school; and in their expectation that they will be successful at the next stage of their education. Small class sizes and outstanding teaching ensure that each pupil learns what is right for them. Sixth form students spend much of their time in their own block. They benefit from following courses that match their individual interests and capabilities. Their outstanding achievement in gaining good grades over a wide range of nationally accredited awards is testament to their hard work and successful learning.

The school is a happy and well-ordered place. Pupils trust staff and see them as friends who will quickly help them if they are troubled. Pupils say that they like school and their parents and carers confirm this. Over time, their understanding of right and wrong becomes secure and many show maturity when they have difficult choices to make, especially those to do with staying safe and keeping healthy. The provision for dealing with pupils' additional needs, including their medical needs, is a particular strength. There are excellent links with the nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, the speech and language therapist and the consultant paediatricians, who hold their clinics at the school. This ensures that all pupils gain maximum access to their learning. Attendance is above average for schools of this type.

The commitment and ambition of the headteacher, and the outstanding team of senior leaders, have driven improvement extremely well since the last inspection. In their actions they have been fully supported by all staff. Pupils are making better progress than last time because teaching is better and the curriculum is broader and more cohesive. There have been other improvements, especially in the way in which parents and carers are helping with the work of the school. Self-evaluation

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procedures provide an accurate picture of the school. Senior leaders have a clear knowledge of the strengths and the areas that require further development. Consequently, the capacity for sustaining improvement is outstanding. The school's governing council and the federated governing body work together well. Both provide considerable support to senior leaders, but challenge is not always as effective because they do not always receive the information they need about pupils' progress to ask informed questions.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To maintain the very high standards, the school's governing council and the federated governing body should ensure that its members:
 - fully and systematically evaluate the work of the school by requiring senior leaders to provide them with all relevant information, especially in judging the progress of pupils against national guidelines and equivalent pupils in other similar schools.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Throughout the school, all pupils make outstanding progress in learning and in moving towards independence. This is so for the minority of girls and those with most complex needs who have the greatest difficulty in their learning and in relating with others. Routinely, lessons are enjoyable events. Most classrooms are spacious and bright. Class sizes are small and this means that there is sufficient space for pupils to work independently or, when required, to join together to share and to listen in improving their communication and social skills. Their outstanding behaviour and the way they work hard to do their best make significant contributions to their successful learning. A focus of teaching, linked with the school's aim to promote independence, is to have pupils take responsibility for their learning. This was seen to good effect in a lesson in information and communication technology. Two teams of four pupils each were making a first attempt at using a digital camera to create a video of their school to show to prospective pupils, and their parents and carers. The teacher gave clear instructions on what was required, including having the pupils decide for themselves which parts of the school they should show and talk about, and who should present and who should operate the camera. There was much hilarity when the videos were played back at the end of the lesson. Then, careful teaching required the pupils to identify for themselves how the cameras could be used to better effect. They reasoned that placing the camera on a tripod would stop the picture from jumping about as much, and panning should be done more slowly to give sufficient time to take in all that was shown. They had fun throughout the lesson and, through being active in their learning, gained a clear understanding of the basic requirements for using a digital camera well.

For the older pupils the curriculum is flexible enough to be tailored to meet their own interests and capabilities. This helps them see their learning as relevant, and this

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inspires them to do their best. The range of accredited awards, from the entry GCSE level in a good number of subjects, awards which focus on functional literacy and numeracy, and vocational awards to do with the motor and construction industries, is sufficient for each pupil to demonstrate the full extent of their learning over their time at school.

Pupils have a very clear awareness of the importance of staying healthy. The school council worked closely with the Healthy Eating Group to make changes in the lunchtime menu so that more healthy meals are offered every day. The lunchtime and after-school sports clubs have a very high take up, and there are regular competitions and games with those in similar schools. Pupils gain in self-confidence by being buddies, playground friends and by helping the younger pupils with their reading. They are proud to be members of the school council and speak enthusiastically of the initiatives that they have led and the charities they choose to support. They practise their communication and social skills during their regular visits to local places, especially the local shops, in support of their learning. Each helps them gain in self-confidence and become more self-assured. Their daily prayers, the clear expectations for learning and behaviour and the considerable gains they make in their personal and social skills, support an implicit understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues such as the importance of trust, belief and friendship.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
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 for the pupils’ age.

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How effective is the provision?

The increasing number of pupils who are joining the school with complex learning difficulties and disabilities is requiring teachers and their assistants to show a greater range of skills, knowledge and expertise to meet their learning needs. This challenge is being met in full, most often through their expert use of additional strategies for communication. Because of the small class sizes, seven is a typical number of pupils in any lesson, teachers and their assistants know their pupils very well. Through outstanding teamwork they make sure that learning is relevant to each pupil, and the success of this is reflected in pupils’ outstanding progress. However, the format for lesson planning is not always consistent across the school.

The primary aim of the curriculum, to develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, is achieved very well in specific lessons. Pupils gain even greater benefit because, in all lessons, teachers and their assistants take every opportunity to use and rehearse pupils’ emerging communication and number skills. Older students take part in the extensive work-experience programme, which provides valuable opportunities to practise their social and independence skills in the adult world. Through the Kingsbury Project, the partnership with the other schools in the federation is making an increasingly effective contribution to raising achievement and to extending pupils’ opportunities for learning. Parents and carers especially value the programmes for play and learning that are available over each of the long holidays.

The school expertly meets pupils’ additional health, medical, movement and social needs. As a consequence, all pupils are well able to fully attend to their learning. Gaining the Achievement for All award has helped further develop the links with parents and carers, especially in dealing with their children’s needs at home. Pupils move from year group to year group smoothly and easily, and transfer successfully to the local or specialist colleges. Good strategic planning, for example in holding medical clinics at the school, means that pupils can routinely access specialist services without having to leave school. The provision required in pupils’ statements of special educational needs is met in full.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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Since the last inspection the burning ambition of the senior leadership team has helped rapidly drive improvement in important areas of the school’s work. Progress is better across the school because teaching is better and well matched to each pupil’s specific needs. The school is a calm and well-managed place where pupils and staff go purposefully about their business. The two governing bodies work closely with each other. Governors have provided good support to senior leaders in their mission to improve the school. Through their frequent visits they have a good knowledge of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. However, they do not always request sufficient information from senior leaders to be able to probe deeply about pupils’ progress. They are rigorous in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are very thorough and that pupils and staff are safe at school. They ensure that the school adopts best practice and levels of training are high.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is central to the work of the school. All pupils have equal access to all the school offers. The effective links with specialist personnel from outside agencies, the expertise of staff in using different methods for communicating with pupils and the caring ethos of the school ensures that all pupils, irrespective of the cause or extent of their special educational needs, do equivalently well against their targets for learning and for their personal development. The provision for community cohesion is good. Pupils have detailed knowledge of their local community through many well-established links and through their regular visits to local places. Experience of communities outside of the local area is achieved mostly through the residential visits available to all pupils. Awareness of international communities is primarily through donations to charities such as Seeds for Africa and Water Aid. Partnerships are having a very beneficial impact on the range and quality of the learning experiences available to pupils. The close links with the two schools in the Federation, and with other relevant agencies in health, social services and education provide outstanding support for pupils and the work of the school. The School Association annually provides considerable funding, some of which is used to ensure that all pupils who wish to are able to take part in the residential programme.

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	1
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

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding leadership and management ensure that the base is a calm, caring and well-ordered place. The children settle quickly as they develop strong and trusting relationships with the adults. In most sessions teaching is outstanding and this leads to outstanding progress against the targets in each of the areas of early learning. The sensory bathroom is much liked by pupils. The outdoor area provides many stimulating opportunities for teacher-led and child-initiated learning, as does the range of toys and play equipment. Assessment procedures are being very effectively streamlined into comprehensive learning journals. Parents and carers much appreciate the regular information they gain on their children’s day and how well they are developing. Transition through the Early Years Foundation Stage and into Year 1 is managed very well. When they leave the Early Years base children know what is expected of them as learners and, within the constraints of their special educational needs and disabilities, are as independent as is possible for their age.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

Sixth form students are prepared outstandingly well for the next stage of their education and later life. Most often, teaching is outstanding. Consequently, excellent progress is made towards good and better grades on a wide range of accredited courses that suit the capabilities and interests of individual students. The flexible curriculum is carefully designed to promote and practise the skills of independent living. They especially gain from their many opportunities to learn outside of school. For example, in a wide range of work placements, such as local garages, food outlets and the bank. The sixth form block is separate from the main school accommodation. Students enjoy the more adult-orientated environment and attend regularly. Outstanding leadership and day-to-day management contribute to making the sixth form a purposeful place in which the aspirations of students are most often met.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers that responded to the questionnaire was below average. All were uniformly supportive of the work of the school. They are extremely happy with the school and feel that, because of the good teaching, their children are making enough progress in their learning, and are being very effectively prepared for the next stage of their education. They are especially pleased that their children enjoy school and feel safe and secure there. They also appreciate the efforts the school makes to keep them informed of the progress made by their children. One parent reflected the perspectives of many when writing, 'Sherbourne Fields provides an excellent environment within which my daughter can learn and socialise'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sherbourne Fields 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 114 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	74	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	87	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	61	8	35	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	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	61	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	57	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	17	74	6	26	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sherbourne Fields School, Coventry, CV6 1PS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We found it to be an outstanding school. These are some of the things we especially liked.

- Whichever part of the school you are in, you make outstanding progress in your learning and in the way you grow up to be as independent as possible.
- You are looked after exceptionally well at school and get plenty of additional help to deal with any issues you may have.
- You say that you feel safe and secure at school and enjoy being there.
- The teachers and their assistants work really hard to make sure you are able to always do your best.
- Your headteacher, the other senior leaders, and all staff are working exceptionally well to make the school an even better place for you.

I have asked that only one thing be changed. I want members of the governing council and the federated governing body to make sure that they gain all the right information from the headteacher so that they can accurately judge for themselves how well you are doing in your learning.

Of course you can help, too, by always behaving as well and always working as hard as you did when we visited your classrooms.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins
Lead inspector

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