

# Limington House School

St Andrew's Road, South Ham, Basingstoke, RG22 6PS

**Inspection dates** October 3-4 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress, especially in communication and personal and social development. This is because the school makes good provision for alternative and assistive methods of communication such as symbols, signs and voice operated devices. As a result many pupils are confident communicators.
- Teaching is typically good across the school and outstanding in the sixth form. Staff instil confidence in pupils to enable them to achieve well and participate in a wide range of activities and experiences.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They enjoy school, form good friendships and look out for one another.
- The school works closely with parents and carers and other agencies to ensure pupils are well placed to learn.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders, including the governing body, provide good strategic leadership, based on a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement have remained good, despite staffing changes, and have improved provision and outcomes, notably regarding pupils' communication.
- The outreach service effectively supports pupils from Limington House School to enable some pupils to learn in other mainstream schools.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On occasions lessons are not challenging enough and sometimes there is not enough pupil participation in learning and the pace of learning is not quick enough.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage accommodation does not enable children to move easily between indoor and outdoor activities.
- Pupils have no protection from bad weather, when arriving or leaving school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition inspectors observed pupils in unstructured settings such as lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Meetings were held with the five members of the governing body, and discussions were held with the school council.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and staff responses.
- The inspection team looked at a range of school documentation including the school's data on pupils' progress, its self-evaluation and development plans. Records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance were also examined.

## Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Limington House School educates pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in separate accommodation.
- The school has an outreach service which provides support for pupils to attend other schools.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
  - ensuring that the pace and challenge in lessons fully meet the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring all pupils are fully engaged in learning in lessons and do not have to wait too long for their turn
  - giving teachers opportunities to observe outstanding teaching to improve their practice.
- Work with the local authority to improve:
  - the accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage to enable children to move more freely between outdoor and indoor activities
  - the arrangements for dropping off and picking up of pupils, at the start and end of the day, so pupils at both times are closer to the school entrance and have some protection from bad weather.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils make expected or above expected progress across most of the school. Progress in Key Stage 2 over the previous two years had dipped. However, this problem has been addressed and progress is now improving rapidly. The progress made by pupils in lessons also supports the judgment that achievement is good.
- An area of strength in pupils' achievement is in their communication and interaction skills. This is because the school has invested in equipment and training to enable pupils to communicate using a range of methods, including symbols, signs and voice operated devices. As a result many pupils are developing into confident communicators. For example, one pupil uses a touch screen phone strapped to her arm to help her communication.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their areas of learning. There are particular strengths in their communication, personal development and physical development. Children are provided with an environment which is rich and stimulating and they respond well. Children enjoy, for example, the range of large and small apparatus, enabling them to develop their physical and coordination skills well. However, although the Early Years Foundation Stage accommodation has been improved since the last inspection, it still has some shortcomings. It does not easily promote children's choice of indoor and outdoor activities. Although children play outside when it is wet, there is no covered area to protect them from the elements. Children enjoy the range of large and small apparatus to develop their physical and coordination skills.
- Students in the post-16 provision make outstanding progress, because of outstanding teaching. Students successfully build upon their previous learning due to the many and varied opportunities to practise skills in a range of settings, such as college, work placements and leisure facilities in the community. Consequently, they gain appropriate accredited qualifications.
- The school tracks carefully the progress of all pupils, including those who are eligible for additional funding. These pupils receive additional support, for example to enable them to resolve emotional issues and access out-of-school activities. All pupils make equally good progress irrespective of their special educational needs, background, gender or disability.
- The school's curriculum and strong focus on literacy, numeracy and communication ensure that all pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their lives. Pupils are eager to read or share books with appropriate support, to help them develop their literacy skills.
- Pupils are developing their use of information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. For example, educational programs that the school has vetted as safe can be accessed at home through the school's website and they are experimenting with how to chat to their class mates through the school's secure chat room.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching meets the wide range of pupils' needs well. Teachers and support staff know pupils well. For example, staff are skilled at recognising the slightest responses of those pupils with the most profound and complex needs, such as reactions to the smell of spices or herbs.
- Teachers are successful in improving the reading and literacy skills of pupils, with effective strategies that combine learning letter sounds with word recognition. More able pupils are keen to write out simple sentences either by hand or using a computer.
- Ample opportunities are created for pupils to develop their numeracy skills, such as using money to buy items and telling the time.
- Nearly all parents and carers feel that their children are well taught. The supportive and positive environment that staff create does much to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Good teaching is supported by a good range of resources, particularly ICT equipment to support pupils' communication needs. Teachers work in close collaboration with the speech and language therapist to devise the best way to tackle communication disorders. In the Early Years

Foundation Stage teaching is effective in getting children to appreciate their emerging skills: for example, one child was relishing learning how to use his index finger to operate a voice talker, with the aid of symbols.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage staff help children to settle quickly into the school and consequently children make good progress.
- Teaching is outstanding in the sixth form because it is lively, engages students well and focuses on equipping them very effectively for their next stage of life.
- Staff keep their knowledge up to date through regular training. This has had a positive impact in ensuring teaching mostly meets the needs of pupils well. Expertise has been developed in the use of sensory methods, signing and interaction with pupils who are developmentally young.
- On occasions there is not enough challenge in lessons, particularly for more able pupils, and the pace of learning is too slow. Sometimes pupils have to wait too long to be involved in an activity and consequently their level of engagement is not as high as it could be, which slows learning.
- Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and analysed and where any underperformance is noted this is fully investigated and action taken to address the issue.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. Pupils have a genuine affection for school activities and staff, and enjoyment of learning is clearly evident. Pupils state they enjoy activities such as swimming, cooking and going to college.
- The school council has been effective in developing pupils' views on the school and has enabled them to make suggestions for improvement. The film club was instigated at their suggestion and they have made the rules, selected furniture and chosen films to watch.
- Pupils' attendance at school is broadly average. Some pupils suffer from ill-health which affects their attendance, but support from the school has reduced absences, for example so that the whole day is not lost for attendance at medical appointments.
- Bullying is rare. Supervision of pupils is excellent and pupils stated they were very confident to talk to staff about any issues of concern. The school is developing innovative ways to enable pupils to be safe online, by using the school website as a safe and secure facility for online activities and social networking. Pupils and their parents and carers agree that they feel safe during their time in the school.
- Lunchtimes and playtimes are good social occasions. There are a variety of activities on offer to occupy pupils. Arrangements to ensure attendance for those pupils who have a tendency to abscond are effective, staff are alert and supervision is good. Pupils who have challenging behaviour benefit from the positive ethos of the school and over time they make good improvements in their behaviour.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is promoted well through assemblies and themed days, such as one based on Hinduism, when a visitor came into school and through music and food explored aspects of the religion. As pupils get older they become increasingly involved in developing their responsibilities in both the school and the wider community.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher and governing body set clear and high expectations, which are widely shared by staff. As result all staff share an ambition for improvement and provide a good quality education for pupils.
- The school gathers and analyses pupils' progress information and uses this effectively to bring about further improvements, for example in Key Stage 2, although this information is not always presented in a simple enough format.
- Planning for further improvements involves staff and governors very effectively. Each year there

is an away day where governors and staff identify future priorities and this informs the school development plan. The improvement of teaching has been rightly identified to secure more outstanding teaching across the school.

- The decision to invest in training and resources to improve pupils' communication skills is one example of the school's success in planning improvements.
- The performance management of all staff has been well managed and implemented. This has contributed to overall good teaching across the school and underperformance has been tackled effectively by the headteacher together with the governing body, although some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. Training of staff is linked appropriately to performance management and whole-school priorities.
- The school is on a restricted site and some aspects of the accommodation impact on pupils' learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by restricting choices on outdoor and indoor learning, and on pupils' comfort when arriving at the school or leaving at the end of the day. Current transport arrangements entail pupils being dropped off a considerable distance from the entrance and in poor weather there is little protection, particularly for pupils in wheelchairs, although the school supplies umbrellas. The headteacher and governing body are acutely aware of the limitations of the school accommodation.
- The local authority has confidence in the school and views it as low risk and needing minimal advice and help. An annual review of the school by the local authority acts as a health check on the school and provides appropriate support when needed.
- Spending for those pupils in vulnerable circumstances has been used wisely and effectively. It has been used to drive up attendance for some individual pupils, provide access to a wider range of activities out of school and giving pupils opportunities to promote their self-confidence and personal development by increasing their friendships in local community groups.
- The school has very positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents' and carers' responses to the online questionnaire indicate a very high level of confidence and satisfaction with the school. It provides good advice and support to parents and carers on a range of issues and a 'lead professional' works with a number of families throughout the school. This support has helped to improve the attendance of some pupils and also tackle problems, so that pupils are in a better place to learn.
- The outreach service supports seven pupils in mainstream school and provides flexible learning matched to pupils' needs and aptitudes.
- The stimulating curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, ensures equality of opportunity and that there is no discrimination. It is highly personalised so that individual needs can be met. The post-16 curriculum in particular equips students well for their next stage of life. The curriculum provides a strong focus on the development of literacy, numeracy and communication across all lessons.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a knowledgeable and accurate overview of the school. It is involved well at strategic decision-making levels. It has good opportunities to influence the priorities of the school through governors' involvement in away days.
  - Governors ask probing questions of the headteacher and hold her to account effectively as well as providing support. They are regularly involved in visits to the school, so they are in touch with the current issues of concern. They have been appropriately involved in the performance management of staff. They have a clear understanding of how funding for pupils in vulnerable circumstances has been used and are able to identify the impact of this spending, particularly in the growing confidence of pupils' communication and interaction.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116614
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401605
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	91
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	20
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Petra Smillie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256322148
<b>Fax number</b>	01256358788
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