

Medina House School

School Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 2HS

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not always achieve as much as they could as the focus of some learning activities is not specific enough.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement as it does not yet secure consistently strong progress.
- Despite the rapid improvements the school has secured there is still much to do to improve outcomes and fully embed the changes.
- Progress in reading has improved but has been slower for writing and is not yet consistently good.
- Progress information and tracking of learning are developing very quickly and effectively, but information is not used sufficiently to inform planning.

The school has the following strengths

- The very strong leadership and management of the headteacher, senior management team and governors have secured rapid improvements in teaching and achievement of pupils.
- The level of care and commitment of staff ensures that pupils enjoy school and behaviour and safety are good.
- The leadership and management of teaching has brought about significant improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to contribute coherently in the classroom to pupils' learning.
- School staff work well together and the team, with external partners, ensure pupils settle quickly into the school and can engage in learning quickly.
- The pupils' personal and social development are very strong.
- There are clear roles and responsibilities in the school and accountability.

Information about this inspection

- All classes were observed by the inspectors. Nine lessons and a whole school assembly were seen and some joint observations were undertaken with the headteacher as well as a learning walk through the school.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, senior staff, teachers, other adults, middle leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including policy documents, safeguarding arrangements and development plans, the school’s pupil tracking data were scrutinised and monitoring reports considered.
- The views of parents were considered through individual letters to the inspectors, the six responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the scrutiny of the school’s own parental questionnaire.
- Staff views were considered through the responses to the 20 questionnaires completed at the time of the inspection and through meeting a large group of teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Paul Scott, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Elizabeth Bull

Additional inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Medina House School caters for pupils mainly with severe (SLD), profound (PMLD) or complex learning difficulties. Around half are diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) or have further associated needs. There is a significant number with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- A new headteacher joined the school in September 2011 and there has been significant restructuring to the leadership of the school. A new deputy headteacher joined in April 2012
- The school governance arrangements are conducted through an interim executive board, with plans to move to a new governing body by September 2013.
- The school has its own provision for children at the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school provides outreach support for other mainstream schools in the area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop consistently good teaching to maximise progress for all pupils by:
 - planning more individualised learning that builds on prior experience and understanding and considers in more detail the milestones to meeting challenging targets
 - enhancing through greater consistency the use of signing and other communication systems
 - assessing learning throughout lessons and adapting learning activities for each pupil.
- Ensure that leaders with newly defined roles and responsibilities are contributing significantly to accelerating pupils' progress and improving the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils join the school in all year groups. Attainment on entry to the school is below what would be expected for their age due to the range of learning difficulties pupils have. Progress is variable throughout the school and requires improvement. At times, pupils make good and outstanding progress, but this is not yet consistent enough. There are, however, no significant differences in achievement between groups of pupils in the school.
- The school now has much-improved tracking of pupils' learning and is able to assess with increasing accuracy the progress pupils are making. There is a positive trend of improvement and a continued determination to increase progress for all groups within the school.
- The school has a clear understanding of the improvements made particularly in reading and the impact of targeted interventions. Progress in writing is not as strong and the school is aware of the need to focus on this area further.
- The personal development and how pupils have increased their mobility, independence and social skills are strong, but this is not always evidenced clearly to show the impact the school is having in these areas. The school has worked hard to increase understanding of all staff in this area, for example looking into the positioning of individuals with partner professionals to ensure pupils are more able to access learning and reduce the risk of physical issues later in life. This increased understanding is not yet fully embedded but there are some excellent examples of its impact so far.
- There has been an increase in the use of signing that is enabling pupils to communicate more effectively and engage more readily socially and in learning. This is improving the confidence of pupils and the enjoyment they have in school. The improvements are clear, but it is not always consistently used in the school particularly when time is short. During the assembly there was extensive use and support for signing that enabled greater participation in the collective experience.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is developing quickly and improvements are having a direct impact on better outcomes for all pupils. Teachers and other adults work together well and at its best this partnership in the classroom is very effective in supporting pupils' progress and in anticipating issues, ensuring challenge and maintaining pace through lessons. During one lesson observed pupils' learning was promoted well through the seamless flow from one activity to the next, ensuring individual support was given as well as promoting independence.
- There is an increased rigour that is now evident in checking pupils' progress and moderation. Teachers are planning lessons more effectively with a greater understanding of how progress and tracking information can be used, but there is not yet sufficient detail in plans to promote consistently good or outstanding progress for individuals.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is very effective and teachers have a clear understanding of how they can improve further and the strengths they bring to the classroom. The positive relationships and passion are clear, as well as an increasingly wide range of knowledge about different issues that impacts on learning.
- There is a very open and positive approach to improving the quality of teaching and all staff appreciate the range of opportunities they have to engage in training and are making increasingly effective use of this in the classroom. The improvements in assessment are testament to this. There is, however, no feeling of complacency and a great passion for improvement pervades the school.
- When signing is used effectively in classrooms this helps to build confidence as well as promoting inclusion. However, approaches are not consistent enough when using signing or other symbol communication systems.
- Teachers and other adults manage behaviour extremely well and, because they have such a thorough understanding of individuals' difficulties, they are aware of triggers and motivators and

so can ensure that there is very little time lost because of behavioural issues.

- At times teaching does not always challenge pupils sufficiently and so opportunities are missed to build on the positive attitudes of pupils and so progress slows.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has worked effectively to ensure systems for safeguarding are in place. Appropriate policies support a safe learning environment and these arrangements have improved significantly. Governors are active in looking at the most effective ways of reviewing practice further and there is a high level of awareness of safety in the school. Governors are aware of areas where they can refine procedures and practice further.
- Training in child protection issues, moving pupils and positive handling techniques have contributed to increased staff awareness and deeper understanding of safety across the school and so impacts positively on the welfare of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and supports learning. Pupils settle well into school and have explained how the school staff look after them and make them feel welcome and safe. This enables them to enjoy lessons and they appreciate the care they receive.
- Pupils are considerate and supportive of each other. This was evident when meeting the school council group who were extremely patient in ensuring all pupils could contribute in their own way.
- Pupils with challenging behaviours rarely interrupt the learning of others and encouragement to participate in learning activities is usually effective.
- There is little bullying and some pupils explained that they can talk through problems and concerns with adults in the school.
- Pupils engage with the school assemblies and, as well as celebrating success, these foster a positive inclusive spiritual, moral and social understanding and collective responsibility for each other.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has developed in a short period of time a clear and coherent strategy for improvement alongside the governors and with the good support of the local authority. Her strong leadership has ensured that staff morale is high and a strong team spirit is evident within this rapidly improving school.
- The inspection evidence supports the view of one parent who summed up the impact of the headteacher in a response to the school survey, who said, 'The new headteacher has brought a fresh, rejuvenated approach to everything. We love her style and energy for the school, children and parents. She also seems to be tightening up on procedures and improving lots of things.'
- Some leaders with new or redefined roles are not yet able to evidence their impact on pupil outcomes.
- The clear focus on improving the quality of teaching has been successful and this has had a direct impact on the improving progress of pupils. The headteacher has raised expectations throughout and implemented an appropriate range of training opportunities across the school to empower staff. Her hands-on and pragmatic approach has helped to ensure staff are able to make the most of development opportunities.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching has established a clear picture of strengths and areas for development. The most senior leaders understand the priorities and have been effective in developing planning and assessment. They recognise the need for further improvement, but are rightly pleased with the secure progress made so far.
- Partnerships with other professionals are strong and they are used effectively to develop best practice in the school and support learning. For example, the impact of physiotherapy and speech and language therapy has improved because teachers and other adults have a greater understanding of the underlying principles behind the therapy.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well within lessons, but

recognises the need to develop further the curriculum in order to meet the needs more effectively of all learners. The school is highly inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity very well through social development, and increasingly so with academic achievement.

- The school provides a range of outreach support for mainstream settings and this is appreciated and valued by the partner schools and the local authority.

■ **The governance of the school :**

- The interim executive board has been effective in focusing efforts on a journey of rapid improvement to ensure pupils get a better deal from the school.
 - Has established, with the headteacher, clear responsibilities and a more effective leadership structure for moving the school forward.
 - Has the experience and understanding to monitor the school's progress, as well as support and challenge leaders.
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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

Unique reference number	118228
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	385863

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Mr Matt Atkins
Headteacher	Ms Julie Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 June 2011
Telephone number	01983522917
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