

Tettenhall Wood School

Regis Road, Tettenhall Wood, Wolverhampton, WV6 8XG

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not enough pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils spend too much time waiting for their turn rather than learning and sometimes staff help too quickly so that pupils do not have opportunities to try things for themselves.
- Older pupils including those in the sixth form are not given enough responsibility or sufficient opportunities to be independent when learning. This is why the sixth form requires improvement.
- Teachers' planning is sometimes too focused on what pupils will do rather than what they need to learn. This is partly because teachers do not always know what learning at different levels looks like. Staff do not always have a clear understanding of what pupils have learnt in mathematics and some other subjects.
- The recently formed senior leadership team do not have a clear picture of the quality of teaching across the school and in all subjects.
- Governors are not asking enough questions about how well pupils learn and how much progress they make.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well. Staff give effective support to pupils who become anxious or find behaving appropriately difficult.
- Teachers ensure the school day and lessons have a clear and familiar structure. This helps pupils to be calm and ready for learning.
- When talking to pupils, staff help them understand what is meant by using visual prompts and sign language.
- The recent opening of new school buildings and the recruitment of a high number of new staff have led to improvements in teaching and have created an atmosphere where pupils are ready to learn.
- Additional specialist support for improving speaking and listening skills is effective in helping the vast majority of those pupils who need it, learn the skills more quickly.
- The senior team have very effectively supported new staff to establish consistent approaches to behaviour and for helping pupils understand what they are saying.
- The headteacher uses information about pupils' achievement to decide what the school needs to improve and the training staff need.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of these lessons to look at teaching and learning. They also looked at pupils' work and case studies.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, staff, two members of the governing body, the educational psychologist, a speech and language therapy assistant and two representatives from the local authority. The views of staff were also gained through a questionnaire completed by 30 staff.
- The views of pupils were gained through talking to two during a tour of the school as well as individual meetings and informal conversations throughout the inspection.
- The views of parents and carers were gained from three responses to the Parent View survey, parents' and carers' views that were recorded at annual review meetings, and informal meetings with two parents.
- Inspectors looked at the school's data on pupils' progress in English and mathematics and behaviour, the school action plan, information about safeguarding pupils, the school's monitoring of teaching, and attendance data.

Inspection team

Janet Thompson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection Tettenhall Wood School has become Wolverhampton's designated school for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils at the school have statements of special educational needs. Over two thirds of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders as well as learning difficulties and others have severe learning difficulties.
- The upper phase of the school caters for pupils between 14 and 19 years old. Some of the oldest pupils attend college courses and work related learning for up to two days per week, supported by school staff.
- There are far more boys than girls at the school. Over one third of pupils are eligible for pupil premium (additional government funding) which is above average and a quarter of pupils are at an early stage of learning English which is double the average.
- The school moved to new school buildings at the start of this term and some areas of the building and site are not yet complete.
- The school offers support to other local schools that are educating pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.
- Apart from the headteacher, others in the senior team have taken up their roles during the last year including the deputy who, following a temporary period, gained the role permanently two weeks prior to the inspection. Two members of the senior team have been absent through ill health for some time.
- Three new teachers and 12 new support staff started at the school this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils achieve more by:
 - making sure teachers understand what learning at different levels looks like, particularly in mathematics across the school, and reading and writing for the oldest pupils
 - planning what pupils are to learn rather than what they will be doing so that all staff including support staff clearly understand this
 - making sure as much time as possible in the school day is spent learning
 - enabling pupils to work at different speeds according to their levels of understanding and concentration
 - adjusting support so that pupils have a chance to think and try things for themselves before they are given extra help.
- Make sure sixth form pupils are better prepared for their futures by using activities that relate to real life to teach a range of subjects ensuring pupils can apply the skills they learn, take on more responsibility and become more independent.
- Improve the impact of senior leaders by:
 - developing the senior leadership team's skills in monitoring and evaluating how much and how quickly pupils are learning
 - supporting governors to have a greater understanding of how to evaluate pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The majority of pupils make expected progress in English and some make more, especially in reading. Pupils also make expected progress in mathematics but sometimes do not have enough opportunities to apply the skills they have learnt in everyday situations. Not enough pupils make consistently good progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils tend to make better progress lower down the school than they do in the upper phase which includes the sixth form. This is because older pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply skills independently in a range of situations. There are some good opportunities for this especially when pupils attend the local college or work based learning provider but this does not happen enough on a day to day basis for all pupils in the upper phase of the school.
- There are suitably structured programmes for mathematics, reading and writing but these have not been fully adapted to ensure all pupils have enough opportunities to practise skills in real life situations.
- Pupils across the school make good progress in learning to speak or use visual symbols to communicate.
- The school has not found any differences between the achievement of girls and boys or pupils who start at different levels or with different needs. There are no significant differences between pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium money and other pupils at the school.
- By regularly checking on how much pupils are learning in English, staff have identified those pupils who are making slower than expected progress. Effective support has been put in place so that nearly all of these pupils have improved their progress. This way of working helps to promote equality of opportunity well but is not consistently applied across other subjects.
- Pupils learn well when teachers have high expectations about what they will learn and a clear structure is used to give plenty of opportunities to practise skills independently. An example of this was seen during the inspection when pupils were following written and visual symbol instructions to make exploding volcanoes. This activity inspired and thrilled pupils who made spontaneous, excited comments about what was happening.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teachers do not always plan to use the time available effectively and do not ensure all pupils are challenged according to their different levels of understanding.
- Staff are good at talking and explaining things to pupils with the help of sign language and visual symbols, but sometimes they give pupils too much help. In these situations not enough learning is expected and the pupils do not have the opportunity to show what they already know or to make mistakes which will help them learn.
- In all subjects there are opportunities for pupils to practise speaking, signing or communicating using visual symbols and this helps pupils develop these skills well.
- When pupils are required to do work involving listening, reading and spelling not all staff apply the structured programme accurately and at times there are too few opportunities for pupils to complete work independently.

- Teachers do not always have a clear picture of what learning at different levels looks like.
- Pupils learn the most when they are given time to think about their response to a question or instruction. A good example of this was seen in a post-16 mathematics lesson when the teacher asked a pupil to find some equipment. Although it took a while, the teacher resisted the temptation to help so that the pupil was able to find the equipment for himself and bring it back to his table and was then ready to learn more.
- In some lessons there is too much emphasis on pupils taking individual turns to do something while sitting in a larger group. This slows down learning because others are waiting with little to learn or do for too long.
- Some teachers plan what they want pupils to do, but not what they want them to learn. When teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, plan and monitor support effectively and enable pupils to learn at different speeds, pupils respond well and make good progress.
- In post-16 classes there is not always enough focus on helping pupils understand how the skills they learn in lessons can be used in a range of real-life situations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good rather than outstanding because sometimes staff help pupils too much and this reduces the amount of responsibility and independence pupils have especially for older pupils.
- Pupils behave well at school because staff use very consistent ways of showing and explaining to pupils what is happening, what will happen next and what is expected of them.
- Pupils who have in the past demonstrated high levels of anxiety are usually calm and although there are a few who still struggle to be relaxed in a wide range of situations they respond well to staff support and are making good progress in this aspect of their learning. The use of restraint for a few pupils with very complex needs has reduced and the environment is positive even when pupils are struggling to cope.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive and pupils show they feel safe by the way they approach adults and each other at the school.
- The school rules are very clear and explained well to pupils and the majority comply with the rules most of the time. Those who talked to inspectors enjoy school and have a clear sense of what is right and wrong.
- Lunch times and break times are pleasant and fun. Pupils are usually supported well to do things for themselves. In the play areas pupils are encouraged to be active and there are some good opportunities for them to practise co-operating and socialising with each other.
- Pupils with the most complex needs are well supported to gain social skills by using regular familiar sensory activities. A good example of this is where two pupils who usually do not interact with other pupils have started throwing a ball to each other independently.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school was previously outstanding but has been through a time of considerable turmoil. The headteacher and senior team have ensured most pupils make expected progress although not consistently good progress during the changes. These changes include having temporary arrangements for the role of deputy headteacher, two staff being absent from the senior team, a move to new buildings and a high number of new staff starting this term.
- The headteacher and the new deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of the improvements the school needs to become good or better. They have helped new staff quickly establish a consistent and effective approach so pupils behave well and are ready to learn.
- Staff training has been effective in ensuring consistency when supporting pupils who become very anxious. If pupils' behaviour is unsafe physical help or restraint is carried out calmly and at the lowest level required.
- The system for monitoring staff performance has been tightened so that it is linked to the achievement made by pupils. The new members of the senior team are at an early stage of being involved in monitoring and supporting teaching. The local authority has provided suitable support to help these developments.
- Staff support pupils when they are learning in other schools and providers and therefore use these opportunities to find out how well the provision is meeting the pupils' needs.
- The leadership team have successfully motivated teachers to make improvements in their lessons, which they do quickly following feedback. The vast majority of staff who responded to questionnaires felt well supported within the school.
- The funding received through pupil premium has been used effectively to increase the rates of progress pupils make in their speaking and listening and these pupils are achieving as well as other pupils in the school. Additional support and staff training for this was approved by governors.
- There is a strong commitment to provide relevant expertise within the school, for example there is an on-site educational psychologist. The effective partnership with speech and language therapy staff supports staff training well and ensures pupils with the most complex needs have effective individual programmes that ensure they can access lessons and learn.
- The few parents who inspectors spoke to or who responded to the Parent View survey would recommend this school to others. They felt staff were supportive and the school was well led. None had any concerns about pupils' care, safety or education.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are not challenging staff enough about the progress pupils make. They have not been able to make the necessary links between what the staff do and how much pupils learn. This is because they do not know enough about the expectations of pupils' progress or how to challenge the progress information presented and how it relates to the quality of teaching. They have supported the headteacher in using the pupil premium to provide additional support to help pupils develop speaking and listening skills but governors have not asked challenging questions about how much this is improving pupils' progress. Governors support the headteacher to reward staff where he suggests this is appropriate or take action when staff are not meeting expectations in their work. Governors are robust, when appointing new staff, in requiring them to have the necessary expertise or make a commitment to undertake

additional training that is provided by the school. Governors have supported the school well in quickly establishing a safe environment in the new buildings. Through regular visits they check pupils are well cared for and supported to behave well. They have ensured effective arrangements are made to help keep pupils safe and there are enough staff and governors who have received the necessary training to do this.

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	104414
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	402944

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	5-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Williams
Headteacher	Mostyn Mahoney
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2008
Telephone number	01902 556519
Fax number	01902 556520
Email address	tettenhallwoodspecialschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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