

Grange Park School

Borough Green Road, Wrotham, Sevenoaks, TN15 7RD

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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

- The school has improved since its last inspection, and students from all backgrounds now achieve well thanks to good teaching.
- Teaching and learning have improved because senior staff identify weaknesses and provide good training for staff which has had a significant impact.
- The sixth form is good. Sixth form students make good progress and are given increasingly good opportunities to prepare for life after school.
- The school has introduced rigorous checks on learning that provide a clear picture of all students' progress.
- Students are extremely well cared for. They feel secure and appreciated as individuals. Students' behaviour improves from the day they start and is now typically good.
- Systems of monitoring and evaluation by school leaders and governors are robust and a clear plan is in place to drive improvement.
- The headteacher, with the acting deputy headteacher, gives a very strong direction to the work of the school.
- Students' attendance improves significantly, often from a low starting point on admission.
- Parents and carers appreciate how well students are supported and the school's reputation is good, and growing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small number of lessons, teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils are challenged all of the time and develop skills to learn on their own.
- There are not enough opportunities for staff to share the outstanding features of their practice that result in the very best learning for all pupils.
- Governors do not capitalise on their formal visits to check on how much progress the school is making in its efforts to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by 10 teachers. Some were joint observations with senior leaders.
- They met with representatives of the governing body and members of staff.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the online Parent View survey and held informal discussions with some parents and carers.
- They observed the school’s work, and looked at school documentation, including data on students’ progress, individual education plans, evidence of self-evaluation and monitoring records, and arrangements for safeguarding.
- Inspectors analysed questionnaire responses from 26 members of staff.

Inspection team

David Marshall, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional inspector

Andrew Lyons

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grange Park School is located on three sites. The main school, for secondary aged students, is contained in new, purpose-built, accommodation next door to a mainstream secondary school. Post-16 students are provided for in two separate technology colleges.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs for autism.
- The large majority of the students are boys.
- The large proportion of students is of White British heritage.
- An above average proportion of the students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional funding provided to support pupils entitled to free school meals among others.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding, by sharing the best practice so that:
 - all teachers plan and deliver lessons that are challenging for all students
 - students are consistently provided with activities which engage them actively in their learning and help them to learn on their own
 - all teachers use questioning to challenge students effectively and all lessons are delivered at a fast and efficient pace to maximise learning.
- Use the governors' current systems to establish a common purpose in their visits to check that planned improvements are taking place and having the desired impact on students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Although there are variations, students enter the school with standards that are well below expectations for their age.
- All students receive a very good start on entry to the school as assessments of what they know and can do are rigorous and integration plans, with supportive care, are very well thought out. This means they settle quickly.
- Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that, throughout the school, all groups of students are taught well and make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress towards the clear and challenging targets in their individual education plans. Students gain an improved level of self-esteem due to the committed relationships they have with adults and the sensitive way in which their needs are met through one-to-one support.
- Students' reading, writing and speaking skills progress well in most subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4 through their individual learning plans. As their confidence grows they grasp the chance to use mathematics in other subjects and do so increasingly well.
- Given their starting points, the achievement of students in the sixth form is good. In the sixth form lessons observed teachers' expectations of pupils were high, but realistic. Students got unstinting support, and achieved very well, persevered and showed their developing critical thinking skills.
- There is some variation in students' achievement between subjects in the sixth form, but these gaps are closing rapidly due to the school's effective improvement strategies. The school has steadily increased the opportunities on certified courses, and all school leavers this year are going on to employment opportunities, or to study academic or vocational subjects at local colleges. These moves to further education or employment are being very carefully planned and monitored.
- The additional funding for students eligible for the pupil premium has been spent effectively by the school on in-class support from teaching assistants and out of classroom interventions involving one-to-one progress review discussions. As a result, this group of students is making at least good progress.
- Parents and carers strongly agree that their children are achieving well, and now enjoy their learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is good over time and some is of high quality, enabling students to make at least good progress.
- In the best lessons, teachers use their high levels of expertise to good effect in fostering excellent learning habits and developing students' resilience and independence. Regular and accurate assessment ensures that these teachers know their students well and set work that is pitched at the right level of challenge. These lessons are typically delivered at a demanding pace, and teachers use questioning extremely well to help students improve their thinking skills and test out what they have understood.
- In the large majority of lessons teachers make effective use of a range of practical activities and a variety of high-quality resources to engage and motivate students. In these lessons, students of all abilities are active participants in their learning. The lessons in the sixth form were of a consistently high quality.
- Teachers are provided with clear and helpful information regarding the specific learning needs in relation to students' particular special educational needs. A range of teaching strategies is used to support students including small-group work. One of the most effective of these is the in-class support by specially trained teaching assistants who use their expertise to help students learn very successfully.
- In lessons where teaching was less effective there was a tendency for teachers to spend too

long giving instructions. Teachers talked for too long and tasks were not sufficiently well matched to the ability of individual students. This slowed the pace of learning and limited opportunities for students to develop the skills needed to learn on their own.

- Very occasionally questioning was only used to check students' knowledge, and answers only required one or two words. Opportunities were missed to fully explore students' understanding and deepen their thinking skills.
- The school has a strong focus on developing students' language and communication skills. Consequently, students' literacy development is planned for and promoted well in most lessons. For example, in a Year 8 PHSE lesson students were encouraged to think deeply about bullying and what it meant to them. The range of well-articulated responses was stunning.
- Students get to know their targets and how well they are doing. Their work is marked regularly and they are given helpful advice about how to move from one level or grade to another.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- As a result of the carefully constructed individual learning programmes and exemplary care, behaviour and safety and pupils' personal development and well-being are good throughout the school, including in the sixth form.
- Students enjoy positive and supportive relationships with all staff members.
- The school places a strong emphasis on the implementation of thorough and practical behaviour plans. As a result, and as the detailed school records show, the behaviour of students improves considerably over time, although as they themselves admit, this is a challenge at times.
- During the inspection, students consistently demonstrated positive attitudes to learning and their developing social skills. This was very evident in the well-organised and very happy lunchtimes where the students are given both freedom to choose and guidance on how to respond.
- Students acquire a good and much improved awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. Many said they are confident that if any issues or concerns around bullying did arise, they would be dealt with swiftly and sensitively. Their knowledge and understanding of the effects of cyber bullying were impressive.
- Despite the number of medical conditions some students have, their attendance overall is above average, reflecting their enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors aspire to excellence and are committed to ensuring that students are given every chance to achieve their potential both personally and academically. The good quality provision across all of its sites successfully promotes equality of opportunity and tackles any form of discrimination well.
- The school uses the pupil premium effectively to improve access to the curriculum for disadvantaged students by the provision of additional staff and to focus on students' own knowledge of their progress through one-to-one discussions.
- The school understands well its own strengths and where improvement is still required, and is effective in using this information to develop its well-conceived priority action plans. This, together with a track record of improvement since the last inspection, demonstrates its good capacity to continue improving.
- The leaders demonstrate skilful management of the performance of teachers. There is a high level of professional support for all staff which is linked closely to performance management in order to improve their practice. Accountability systems are strong and weaker teaching has been tackled vigorously. There is no automatic progression on the pay scale. The headteacher and governing body have established procedures to ensure that teachers continue to sustain an appropriate quality of teaching according to previous pay decisions.
- The leaders undertake frequent and useful monitoring of lessons and feed back helpfully and accurately to staff on what has gone well and where further work is required.
- Through the particular focus of the deputy headteacher, the school has upgraded its

procedures for tracking and reporting on students' progress across all the sites and there is increasingly detailed and accurate information on how well individuals and groups are learning.

- The local authority has very effectively supported the school since its last inspection by providing ongoing monitoring and very carefully considered guidance.
- The school has a very thorough approach to safeguarding and the governors have ensured that requirements in this area are fully met on all the sites. Staff are watchful at all times and provide a high standard of care for the students.
- There is a trusting and highly effective partnership between the school and the students' families. There is weekly, and often daily, contact with parents or carers, particularly focusing on their children's behaviour, and parents and carers are delighted that staff more often than not convey positive news about their children's progress.
- The school successfully provides a relevant, accessible and enjoyable curriculum that promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- **The governance of the school:**

The governing body is fully involved in all school processes, checking decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging but supportive manner by asking probing questions when presented with documents and reports, and regularly scrutinising the school's work by analysing the performance of students. Although governors know the school well, there are missed opportunities on governors' visits for them to make a contribution through their focused monitoring of initiatives. They ensure that pupil premium funding is spent effectively on one-to-one discussions or additional support in lessons. Their involvement in performance management underpins the school's strong capacity for further improvement. This includes ensuring that there is a clear link between how well pupils achieve and how well staff are paid.

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	119051
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	401800

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Balfour
Headteacher	Robert Wyatt
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2010
Telephone number	01732 882111
Fax number	01732 848004
Email address	office@grangepark.kent.sch.uk

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