

# St Giles School

Babworth Road, Retford, DN22 7NJ

## Inspection dates

13–14 December 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 in reading, writing and mathematics because they are taught well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress in communication (using pictures and signs) and in developing their independence.
- The sixth form is good. It enables students to gain good life- and work-related skills, and valuable vocational qualifications.
- Pupils behave well and know how to keep themselves safe.
- All leaders, including governors, are committed to removing any obstacles that get in the way of learning for pupils. Thorough checking of teaching has resulted in changes which have contributed to raising pupils' achievement and to school improvement.
- Pupils are provided with staff who are well trained in a wide range of techniques and high quality resources so as to speed up their learning.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, teachers do not make enough use of their knowledge of what the most-able pupils can already do so as to move them on quickly enough with new learning.
- Occasionally in lessons, pupils are not clear about what they are expected to learn when they are moved on from one activity to another.
- The pupils who are best at English and mathematics do not get opportunities to work with pupils in mainstream schools so as to extend them further.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by 12 different teachers. All lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors heard pupils read (using pictures, symbols and text).
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a sample of care plans, feeding plans, handling documents, assessment information, the school's plans for improvement and its monitoring information. They examined a range of documentation including safeguarding policies and records relating to the work of the governing body. The lead inspector examined 44 staff questionnaires.
- There were 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. These views were taken into account by inspectors, along with letters sent in to the school marked for the attention of the inspection team. The lead inspector also spoke with five parents and carers who visited the school during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter McKenzie

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This school is designated as a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in the number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and profound and multiple learning difficulties. A few pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Pupils' additional needs include hearing impairment, visual impairment and physical difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported through the pupil premium (extra funding from the government for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals).
- Most pupils are White British and none are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The school is based in new purpose-built accommodation. The sixth form provision is located on a different site.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2012. The leadership team has recently been strengthened by appointing an additional assistant headteacher from September this year and promoting a member of staff from within the school to drive on improving learning.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all classes by:
  - making effective use of information about what the most-able pupils can already do to plan work so that it is set at the right level to ensure they are challenged enough
  - ensuring pupils are always clear about what they are expected to do and learn when they are moved from one activity in a lesson to another so that the pace of learning does not slow.
- Develop working partnerships with neighbouring mainstream schools so that the most-able pupils from this school in English and mathematics have opportunities to work alongside pupils in mainstream schools so as to raise their achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress. As their communication develops, they make their needs known; some by eye pointing or gesture; a few using words. Some who could only lie on their backs a few months ago now turn over onto their 'tummies' independently.
- Sixth form students develop relevant work-related skills and acquire good vocational qualifications. They are well-equipped to cope as independently as possible in adult life. Most shop, cook a meal and travel independently. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress from their starting points.
- All groups of pupils make better than expected progress in reading and writing. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties experience books; a few, with support, turn a page. Those with severe learning difficulties read simple texts and picture books. The most-able pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties read fluently and have a good understanding of what they read. Writing ranges from mark making in a sand tray; through the use of computer symbol programs to produce stories; to very good writing for a PowerPoint presentation.
- Some of the best progress is made in mathematics. In Key Stage 3, it is outstanding. The most-able pupils calculate accurately; measure with precision; and use correct mathematical language in describing the properties of geometric shapes. Those with visual impairment and exceptionally complex needs track a light line. Pupils with severe learning difficulties use money and work out their change when they purchase items in a 'pretend' shop and learn to tell the time.
- In most lessons, pupils make good progress; in an increasing number, pupils' progress is outstanding. However, a little inconsistency remains. In a few lessons, progress for the most-able pupils is slowed because they are not challenged enough. On rare occasions, they sit for too long without being moved on quickly enough with new learning. A few pupils working at the highest level in English and mathematics do not have the opportunity to be extended by working alongside mainstream pupils.
- The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds receive high quality individual support. As a result, they make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding is used to purchase resources aimed at improving the literacy skills of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. It is also used for training staff to better teach pupils with autism. This investment makes a significant impact on raising the achievement of these pupils.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is at least good. There are pockets of outstanding teaching, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching is improving rapidly because of the targeted advice and training teachers receive following observations of their lessons by the headteacher. In particular, this has speeded up

pupils' progress in reading and writing this year as teachers have become highly skilled in using a range of suitable methods to teach English.

- In the best lessons, teachers use their knowledge of what pupils can already do to match work to the next steps in their development. In an outstanding information and communication technology lesson for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, each pupil made outstanding progress because activities were tailored to their specific learning needs. When pupils wandered away from their computers, they were brought back skilfully and coached to continue with their set tasks. All pupils in this class dragged an auto shape to the page independently; most added colours to their chosen auto shape; and a few produced good quality PowerPoint presentations.
- In a few lessons for the most-able pupils, teachers do not use information about what they can already do to move them on to new learning quickly enough. This was observed in a Year 10 and 11 mathematics lesson. In this same lesson, when moved from doing a whole class activity to group activities, pupils were not clear about what it was they were expected to learn. This slowed their pace of learning.
- In almost all lessons, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They successfully support pupils in improving their reading and writing skills. In a sixth form physical education lesson, every student made outstanding progress in their development of hockey skills, including those in wheelchairs, because of the one-to-one support and challenge they received from their teaching assistants.
- In a class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, there was a real buzz; the atmosphere was energetic, the pace was dynamic, and every pupil was engaged in a stimulating activity. As a result, each used a switch; each anticipated a response in doing so; and a few initiated their own learning.

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

- On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's behaviour is challenging because of their frustration at not being able to communicate. They do not all understand the meaning of 'no' and find it hard to share toys. As their communication and movement improves, they calm down and the improvement in their behaviour is outstanding
- Throughout the school, teachers skilfully manage pupils' challenging behaviours well. They make sure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are comfortable so as to remove obstacles to learning for them. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are seated away from objects with which they are likely to become fixed through obsessive behaviours. Consequently, pupils with behavioural difficulties engage well with learning.
- Effective verbal prompts and re-directing pupils who wander off set tasks successfully re-engage them with learning. Around the school, pupils are polite and courteous. Older pupils, with the ability to do so, take delight in helping younger pupils. Overall, behaviour is good. Attendance is average and improving. Absence is related to lengthy stays in hospital.
- Pupils who communicate using words say that they feel safe. They can approach a trusted adult and talk about their worries. Those with complex difficulties express, through smiles, that they feel comfortable with the adults who look after their intimate care needs. Overwhelmingly, parents and carers say that their children are safe.

- Bullying incidents are exceptionally rare and there are no racist incidents. Occasionally, fights break out over what the pupils call 'mother cussing'. These are stopped speedily and staff work ceaselessly to ensure that pupils involved reconcile their arguments.
- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of cyber-and prejudiced-based types of bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe. They understand the danger of doing 'flips' in the hydrotherapy pool; have a good sense of road safety; understand why they must wear a reflective jacket when riding a 'bike' in the dark; and have an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe when using computers. They are aware of potential stranger danger. Older pupils know that drinking too much alcohol can cause liver damage and that smoking cigarettes can cause lung cancer.

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

- The headteacher's relentless drive to improve teaching has significantly increased the amount of outstanding teaching. Pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are checked rigorously and subsequent training is targeted to improve teachers' particular skills. Teachers have responded constructively and their practice is much better than it was twelve months ago.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Decisive actions result from it, which benefit pupils. For example, recent analysis of pupils' reading assessments demonstrated that pupils with autistic spectrum disorders made faster progress in their technical skills as readers than in their comprehension skills. A new approach to reading for them was launched; staff were trained; and their comprehension skills have improved.
- The recently re-structured leadership team is highly effective. Changes have been made to the curriculum, which have enhanced the quality of education for pupils. This is most evident in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form where new courses and accreditation opportunities have been put in place. These courses enhance pupils' learning and speed up their progress. The local authority has given the school valuable support, especially in improving its assessment procedures.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils reflect as they stare at sensory trails which run through the school's garden. They take responsibility by sitting on the committee of the firm who built the school and successfully promote awareness of disability equality. Their awareness of cultural diversity is raised through a link with schools in Brazil and South Africa.
- Leaders ensure that the different groups of pupils receive equal chances to succeed and rigorously tackle any discrimination. However, the most-able pupils are very occasionally not challenged enough in lessons. Also, they do not get opportunities to attend lessons with pupils in mainstream school although a few are ready to be stretched in this way to speed up both their social and academic achievement further.
- Work with parents and carers is good. Effective workshops support carers and parents in helping their children to improve their behaviour and their reading.
- **The governance of the school:**

Governance is good. The governing body is involved in evaluating the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. Its members are directly involved in shaping the school's improvement plan. They know that this is a good school. Governors have undertaken

thorough and effective training provided by the local authority so that they know how to interpret the school's assessment systems. This means that they are well-equipped to challenge any areas of concern about pupils' progress. They support the senior leaders effectively, but do not shy away from challenging them. Regularly, they review pupils' progress at their meetings, understand data and ask tough questions about any underperformance. Any teacher who does not perform well is not allowed to move up the pay scale. Governors are involved in putting a support plan in place to help any teacher who underperforms, but failure to respond and improve is not tolerated. The focus is sharply on providing the best quality education for the pupils. There is a governor panel in place to review the headteacher's performance. Safeguarding meets all requirements and governors have undertaken safeguarding training. Important financial decisions, including the allocation of the pupil premium funding, are based on driving pupils' achievement.

## 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>	122955
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402119

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<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>	131
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	42
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrea Scott-Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hilary Short
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01777 703683
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