

Fort Royal

Wyld's Lane, Worcester, WR5 1DR

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress and achieve well. They make particularly good progress in developing communication skills and excellent progress in their physical development.
- Much of the teaching is good, with some examples of outstanding practice. Teachers plan effectively to meet pupils' needs and use signs and symbols as well as spoken language very effectively to help pupils express their views.
- Pupils of all ages feel safe in school. Their behaviour is excellent, and their confidence and independence greatly improve as they move through the school.
- The headteacher, with strong support from senior staff, has shown determination in checking the quality of teaching to ensure improvement since the last inspection and that it meets the increasing complexity of pupils' needs.
- Governors challenge the school effectively, playing a very active part in helping to improve the quality of provision.
- The school is highly successful in engaging parents as partners in supporting their children's education.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently check on the progress the pupils make during lessons to ensure the work set is challenging at all times.
- The other adults who support the pupils' learning do not always have the skills and knowledge needed to make sure that pupils progress as well as they might.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, six of which were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work and heard some read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the results of a recent school parental questionnaire and questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's improvement planning and the information it keeps on pupils' current progress. The team looked at documentation relating to the staff's performance management (the checking on how well they are doing and the setting of targets to help them improve their work) and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Hilary Green

Additional Inspector

Russell Hinton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs for severe learning difficulties.
- Approximately a third of the pupils have additional autistic spectrum disorders.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average but the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above average. This is extra funding provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils in local authority care and those who are from service families.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Fort royal is a generic Special School where many of the pupils have severe learning difficulties, so it is not applicable to relate the school to the government's floor standards, which are the expectations for progress and attainment ordinarily set for schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the percentage of outstanding teaching by making sure that all teachers check on the progress pupils make during lessons so that the work can be changed to make sure it is challenging at all times.
- Raise the achievement of the pupils further by making sure that the other adults supporting the pupils' learning are appropriately trained in English and mathematical skills and knowledge.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils, including those who have severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders, make good progress. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in line with their peers in school and achieve in line with similar pupils nationally. This is because of good teaching.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to promote the learning and involvement of eligible pupils. In the last year, the school has used this funding to increase the number of additional adults, to provide a range of pupil-specific resources and to fund holiday learning places. Pupils for whom the school receives this funding have progressed as rapidly as other pupils and the gaps in progress that existed for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are narrowing rapidly.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Progress is particularly good in English and mathematics because numeracy and literacy are taught in all subjects through well-planned lessons. For example, pupils successfully focused on learning the meaning, pronunciation and spelling of important key words in a mathematics lesson on shapes, and teachers understood that this improved pupils' listening, language and communication.
- Pupils learn to express themselves well, either verbally or through the use of signs and symbols. This has developed their independence both in school and at home.
- The pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning. This is especially so in understanding and responding to adults through the school's excellent communication strategies. These provide the children with confidence to express themselves. This is accompanied by very good progress in their self-help skills and personal development.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 maintain this momentum and all make good with some making outstanding progress because teachers maintain the emphasis on communication through the very effective use of symbols and pictures. In Key Stage 2, pupils also make good progress overall, with most making at least good progress in communication and in the early stages of literacy and numeracy. A few children begin reading in the Reception Year, whereas some other pupils gain reading skills as they move through the school.
- In the best lessons, pupils make excellent progress because of the quality of the recording of each small step in their development, which teachers build on consistently. Where lessons are not as strong, there is not the same attention to detail and, in these instances, the pace of pupils' learning and their progress slows.
- All pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. Teachers and speech therapists assess their communication needs carefully and provide tailored activities to promote each pupil's language and, thus, self-confidence. Pupils make every effort to communicate, usually using symbols and signs until their language has developed sufficiently. Some of the older pupils become proficient in spoken and in written language and this equips them well for their next school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the whole school is usually good and there are examples of outstanding practice

in all parts of the school.

- Good questioning and discussion by all adults provides pupils with opportunities to explain their own learning and how they could tackle it.
- Good use is made of all opportunities for pupils to practise their English and mathematical skills across all their learning.
- Teachers are skilled at getting the best out of pupils and stimulating them to listen, think and try their best. Parents rightly state that their children are supported well by experienced teachers who know how to explain things and interest them.
- Where teaching is at its best, teachers constantly monitor the progress their pupils are making in the lesson and then adapt the work to make sure it is always challenging. In lessons where teaching is not as strong, this does not always happen and so progress is slower.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills. They use spoken language, signs and symbols and a range of electronic devices very effectively, along with very good use of interactive whiteboards, to give pupils the confidence to make their views known.
- Teachers and the other adults who support learning have excellent relationships with pupils. They use behaviour management techniques skilfully to improve pupils' behaviour. They listen carefully to pupils and create a positive climate for learning. This contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The other adults supporting the pupils play a key role in the improving progress pupils make but they have not been trained sufficiently in the development of English and mathematical skills and knowledge to allow them to further assist in increasing pupil progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils say they enjoy their learning and that their teachers are 'brilliant', and their behaviour reflects this. They are polite, respectful to each other and adults, and want to do their best.
 - Those who have behavioural needs on joining the school make remarkable progress in managing their behaviour. This is because everyone has high expectations of them to do their best to improve, and staff provide them with the help to do so. It is also because teachers, and the other adults who provide support, are so skilled at motivating pupils and managing their behaviour positively.
 - The excellent range of opportunities provided to encourage pupils' personal, social and emotional development means that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe.
 - All parents and carers agree that their children are kept safe. They are pleased with how happy their children are to come to school, and this is reflected in the high attendance of those who do not have medical needs.
 - Pupils get on with each other extremely well; bullying of any kind is very rare indeed and pupils
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know that they can talk to an adult if they are being bullied.

The leadership and management are good

- The experience, expertise and determination of the headteacher, supported effectively by the deputy headteacher, have secured a strong drive for improvement over several years. The improvements are evident in teaching, in the monitoring of pupils' progress, and in achievement. The headteacher has set up a further tier of responsible staff, who are proving successful in looking at pupils' achievement and the subjects taught across the whole school.
 - By generating a belief that each pupil can achieve well, whatever their difficulties, leaders ensure that pupils make good progress, particularly in the development of their ability to communicate and be independent. This has a strong influence on the good levels of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
 - The school's leaders keep a careful watch on the pupils' performance and have set up detailed and robust tracking procedures to monitor progress.
 - The range of subjects taught is good and they are integrated into topics with a clear emphasis on basic skills of communication, English and numeracy. The pupils experience a broad and balanced mix of activities which allows them to see links between subjects and which consistently provides them with opportunities to extend and apply their language skills across a range of topics.
 - The school has equality of opportunity as a guiding principle and tackles any discrimination so that there is a very harmonious working atmosphere. Pupils with specific needs are targeted effectively, with a range of specialist teaching that ensures that all groups make good progress.
 - Performance management procedures have been made more rigorous and are used well to support an upward trend in the quality of teaching and makes sure that all teachers have skills in line with the recently published national *Teachers' Standards*.
 - Whole-school self-evaluation is much improved and actions are carefully planned and effective, providing evidence of the school's good capacity to improve further.
 - Pupils' safety is paramount and safeguarding procedures are followed meticulously. Excellent working with other agencies and parents promote the safety, wellbeing and learning of all pupils.
 - The local authority provides the school with advice and support at a low level as and when they request it.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors receive detailed and accurate reports from the headteacher and other staff, based on robust self-evaluation. There are appropriate sub-committees which examine all aspects of the school's work in detail. As a result, the governing body is well informed and has a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide a good level of challenge and support to the school. They are fully briefed on the pupils' achievements, including the progress of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium. Governors are also fully aware of performance management procedures, and they monitor teachers' pay progression against their performance. The governing body has monitored safeguarding procedures in the school
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rigorously and ensured that they meet statutory requirements.

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	131534
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	402477

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Wheldon
Headteacher	Jane Long
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2010
Telephone number	01905 355525
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