

Brantridge School

Staplefield Place, Haywards Heath, RH17 6EQ

Inspection dates 31 January – 1 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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, particularly the more able, make good progress, because not enough teaching is good or better.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems in mathematics, or to write at length in English and other subjects.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations. The work pupils are given is sometimes too hard or too easy.
- In a few lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils lose concentration and distract others.
- Pupils' work is not always neat enough and teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear comments on how to improve their work.
- Pupils' targets in English and mathematics are not consistently used in lessons to enable them to make better progress.
- School leaders, including governors, have an overly positive view of how well the school is doing because information on pupils' progress is not used well enough to check on the quality of teaching and make sure that all pupils are achieving well.
- Some middle leaders do not use enough rigour to bring about improvements in their areas of work.
- Governors do not have a good understanding of how additional funding is used and the effect this has on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths:

- The school takes great care of its pupils, especially those whose circumstances might put them at risk.
- Pupils are happy at school and feel safe.
- There has been some improvement in English and mathematics since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, all of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with the senior and middle leaders, teaching staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor and the Chief Executive of Grafham Special Educational Trust.
- The inspector observed the work of the school, and looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own information and checks of how well pupils are doing. She also checked planning documents, record of checks on the quality of teaching, and records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 6 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey of parental views.
- The inspector also examined questionnaire responses from members of staff.

Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brantridge is a residential special school. The large majority of pupils are weekly boarders. A small number of pupils attend daily.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs, mainly for behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- All pupils are admitted through a referral from a range of local authorities in the south east.
- The school is part of Grafham Grange Special Educational Trust.
- The school does not make use of any off-site alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. There are three looked-after pupils on roll. Pupil premium is additional funding given to schools for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after and those from families in the armed forces.
- Pupils can enter the school at different starting points across all key stages.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in April 2012.
- The school's residential provision is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by making sure that:
 - work is always set at the right level for pupils, especially the more able
 - the time pupils spend listening to the teacher is kept to a minimum, so that there is a brisk pace to lessons and that pupils can start their work as quickly as possible
 - marking in books and the use of pupils' individual targets are consistent across the school so that all pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work
 - only neatly presented work from pupils is acceptable.
- Raise attainment and improve progress in English and mathematics, particularly for the more able, by:
 - making sure that pupils have regular, planned opportunities to practise writing at length, in all subjects
- developing pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems. Strengthen leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - making sure the school has a more accurate view of its work
 - making sure that all leaders and managers use performance information to check on the quality of teaching and make certain that all pupils, especially the more able, are achieving well
 - making sure that such checks focus closely on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and provide precise guidance as to how individual teachers can improve their work
 - supporting new leaders in checking more carefully on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of work and tackling weaknesses, so that pupils make at least good progress
 - making sure the governing body rigorously holds the school to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - checking that the effectiveness of the spending of pupil premium money is judged by how well any gaps in attainment are closing.
- 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

- Although attainment rose in 2012, achievement is not yet good because too few pupils make better than expected progress from their various starting points on entry. Few pupils achieve above-average standards because some of the more-able pupils are not being challenged sufficiently and are not, therefore, reaching the highest standards of which they are capable.
- The progress of pupils currently in school varies widely from one year to the next, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is because teachers do not routinely provide work that is set at the right level for pupils. As a result, work is either too hard or too easy for some pupils and this slows progress, particularly for the more able.
- Pupils make weaker progress in writing because pupils do not have enough chance to write at length, in a range of styles, either in literacy lessons or in other subjects. Additionally, pupils are not provided with enough examples of the quality of writing they should aspire to reach, for example, through classroom displays of the best writing.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have enough time to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving activities. Consequently, progress in mathematics is not yet fast enough to ensure that all pupils, especially the more able, achieve well.
- Pupils' progress in reading is rapidly improving, as a result of an intensive reading programme and pupils are increasingly confident in their reading skills. Pupils now have a wide range of books in school and enjoy opportunities to read extensively. As one pupil commented, 'I never used to pick up a book before but now I can't stop!' Teachers work well in partnership with parents and carers to improve pupils' reading skills so that attainment is now broadly in line with that of all pupils nationally.
- The very small number of pupils who receive additional funding through the pupil premium make good progress from their starting points both through additional support in lessons and opportunities to enhance their experiences. As a result, their average point scores now exceed those of their peers nationally.
- Those pupils who join the school at other than the usual times also make as much progress as their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good to raise pupils' achievement rapidly.
- Where teaching is less effective, the teachers' expectations of pupils are too low and do not build upon what pupils can already do. The work they give to pupils is too easy, especially for the more able pupils, and they do not make as much progress as they could. Checks on pupils' work in mathematics show some complete pages of the same 'sums' without sufficient attention being given to providing work that is at the right level for each individual pupil.
- On a few occasions, teachers' explanations are too long. As a result, some pupils lose interest and concentration, limiting their ability to understand what they need to do, engage with the set task and make good progress.
- In literacy, pupils do not get regular opportunities to write extended pieces in different styles to apply the skills they have learnt. In mathematics, there is not enough focus on open-ended investigation and problem solving.
- Pupils have targets to help them improve their work but they are not used regularly across the school. Some pupils do not know their targets or use them sufficiently to help them know the next step they should take in their learning, especially to reach the higher levels.
- Marking does not always make it clear to pupils how to make their work better and meet their targets. Teachers do not always insist that pupils take care in the way they present their work. This has contributed to some pupils making slower progress.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. Pupils

work on a range of activities at different levels well matched to their levels of understanding. This was demonstrated well in an excellent Key Stage 2 science lesson, where the teacher kept a close eye on the pupils' learning and changed her plans to match pupils' understanding and progress. Questions were used skilfully in order to encourage pupils to think carefully and extend their learning so that all pupils made rapid progress throughout the lesson. Teaching assistants were used well to support less able pupils, helping them to make similar progress to their classmates.

- Reading is taught well. Teachers encourage pupils to read both for enjoyment and to find information to support their topic work. The sharing of a 'class book' and use of a library help to develop a reading culture across the school and encourage an excitement in learning.
- Learning in the extended day provision is well planned and responsive to pupils' needs and interests. Supervising adults assess progress and talk to teachers to provide extra information about the pupils' skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Although the school's records show that serious disruptions to learning are rare, pupils' behaviour is weaker where teaching is less effective. This is because tasks are not sufficiently engaging and matched to their individual needs. Consequently, pupils can become restless and less focused, and then do not learn as well as they should. At times pupils need too many reminders not to disrupt other pupils by chatting or doing tasks that are not important to their learning.
- Pupils feel extremely safe in school because of the various ways they are able to let teachers know if they are worried. Pupils trust that the messages posted in the 'worry boxes' will be read daily so they are confident that any concerns will be addressed quickly. Most of the parents and carers who responded to the school's survey agreed that their children felt safe at school.
- Pupils say that they usually get along very well, and inspectors could see that they are very friendly and kind to each other during their free time. They are polite towards adults. When they occasionally fall out with each other, they say that they are encouraged to talk about it to sort it out, but that adults will help them if they need it.
- Staff show very high levels of care and concern for each pupil, and spend considerable time supporting their physical, emotional and social well-being. Relationships with pupils are strong, which helps the staff to be sensitive to small changes in their well-being, and to provide speedy support if necessary.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying and its different forms, including name-calling and cyber-bullying. They know what action to take should bullying occur. The school has clear procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, including bullying. Pupils were confident that it is quickly and effectively dealt with by all staff, should it occur.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good. Leaders have not made sure that all teaching is good.
- The school's view of its effectiveness is over-optimistic. Senior leaders do not use performance information well enough to check that all pupils are achieving well in relation to national expectations of progress. As a result, leaders do not have a complete picture of how well pupils are achieving, or identify aspects of teaching that could be improved. This leads to some weaknesses not being sufficiently identified or resolved.
- The trend in low attainment since the previous inspection has been reversed and the improvement in standards in both English and mathematics shows that leaders and managers have the capacity to secure further improvement in the school.
- Additionally, checks on pupils' progress are not always used well by class teachers to make sure

that suitable tasks are given to all pupils to achieve their best.

- The roles and responsibilities of teachers in charge of subjects have been redefined to focus more clearly on raising achievement. However, not all have the skills necessary to check the quality of teaching in their areas with enough rigour to identify and tackle weaknesses securely.
 - Arrangements for checking the performance of teachers have been strengthened significantly. All teachers now have ambitious targets for the progress of pupils in their care. Staff training is explicitly linked to identified areas for improvement. Annual appraisal is now to be used when determining pay increases.
 - The way that subjects and topics are taught requires improvement. Pupils do not have enough time to write at length and to solve problems in other subjects in order to make better progress. There is, however, a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, particularly through the residential provision, which promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
 - All statutory safeguarding regulations and duties are met and regularly reviewed. Leaders promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. However, not all pupils are receiving consistently good teaching.
 - The local authority has provided light touch support for the school in monitoring the quality of teaching, which has not been sufficient to bring about lasting improvement.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors' view of the quality of teaching is too generous because they have not taken full account of pupils' progress in comparison to national expectations in order to challenge leaders rigorously enough about the school's performance and current inconsistencies in teaching. Since the last inspection, the governors (including Trustees) have taken action to strengthen the procedures for monitoring teachers' performance. They have not been afraid to make difficult decisions about pay rises. As a consequence, no more teachers than appropriate have moved higher on the pay scale. Training records indicate that governors have taken appropriate steps to increase their expertise. They make sure that the school meets national requirements, including those for safeguarding children. Although the governing body challenges financial decisions and value for money it does not have a good overview of how well the pupil premium funding is being used and the impact this has had in relation to improvements in pupils' outcomes.
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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	134063
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402592

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	6–13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Lloyd Richards
Headteacher	Mrs Gina Wagland
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 February 2010
Telephone number	01444 400228
Fax number	01444 401083
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