

Bishopswood School

Grove Road, Sonning Common, Oxfordshire, RG4 9RJ

Inspection dates

19–20 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- All pupils, including those with additional special educational needs, achieve well. Progress in communication, language and literacy, including matching letters and sounds, is good.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress, achieving very well in each area of learning.
- Good teaching means that most pupils achieve well in their activities. Learning often moves at a good pace and communication aids are used well to give pupils a voice and offer them choices.
- Parents are rightly pleased with the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are safe and secure at school.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of learning experiences and many additional activities such as exciting trips into the community and residential experiences that engage them well.
- Pupils are extremely well cared for. The high quality therapies contribute very well to their health, well-being and learning.
- Through efficient planning, the governing body makes sure that money is spent well for the benefit of all groups of pupils.
- Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has a clear vision and there is a strong focus on improving the performance of staff through high quality training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Occasionally staff do not make the best use of communication aids.
- The school does not always make the best use of assessment information about pupils' achievements to show how well different groups of pupils are doing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons, jointly with the headteacher, during visits to all three sites.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior teachers, the Clinical Nurse Specialist, the three headteachers from the co-located mainstream schools, members of the outreach service, a group of pupils, and three members of the governing body. The inspector also had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' profiles.
- The inspector took account of parents' responses to the school's own questionnaires. There were too few responses to the online survey (Parent View) to form a judgement. The inspector spoke to four parents during the inspection. Questionnaires were received from 20 staff members.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bishopswood is a school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. About half of pupils have additional special educational needs including autism spectrum disorders, physical impairments and/or speech and language difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and those with a parent in the armed forces) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is about average but most speak English at home.
- The school has three different sites, each one based in local mainstream schools. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are based in a primary school about five miles from the other two sites. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are co-located with a local primary school and those in Years 7 to 11 share a site with a nearby secondary school. The Bishopswood governing body and leadership team manage the three sites.
- The school provides outreach support to several local schools.
- The headteacher has been in post just over a year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching so that all groups of pupils make rapid and sustained progress by:
 - making sure that all staff make the best use of communication aids, including technology, so that all pupils have a voice and can make choices and respond to questions.
- Improve the use of assessment information to identify how well the different groups of pupils at the school are achieving.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils across the school, including those with additional special educational needs, achieve well. As a result, they make good progress, achieving particularly well in reading, communication, mathematics and in their personal development.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress because of very focused teaching and the exciting, inclusive environment in their mainstream Nursery class.
- Reading skills improve quickly, particularly for younger pupils, because of the effective introduction of a phonics programme (matching letters and sounds). This is having a positive impact on the confidence of younger pupils. This was evident as pupils in Years 3 to 6 showed that they are beginning to recognise initial sounds in words and a few of the more able pupils could blend new words and read simple sentences.
- Pupils across the school benefit from opportunities to be included in wider school life. Primary pupils, for example, were observed achieving well in a mathematics lesson, working with their mainstream peers to solve challenges and complete answers to questions.
- The vast majority of pupils make effective use of communication aids such as signs, symbols, photographs or switch technology. A few pupils do not have enough opportunities to use such aids to develop their own voices and make responses to questions.
- Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well and they all gain some accredited qualifications before they leave the school to go to college.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium achieve as well as other pupils in both English and mathematics because of their full inclusion in all activities.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in swimming. The school's own parent questionnaires show that parents are pleased with their child's achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers promote a calm and supportive atmosphere and provide some challenging tasks that fully engage pupils in learning and inspire their interests. Teaching is almost always good and some is outstanding in both older and younger classes.
- High quality training for staff has resulted in the very effective teaching of phonics. As a result pupils learn to match letters and sounds and their reading skills are improving at a fast rate. Effective strategies to link reading and writing are also having a positive impact on literacy skills.
- Pupils' achievements are accurately recorded by staff, often through photographs, observations, or annotated notes of successes. For older pupils, files of work are accurately and helpfully marked. 'Learning journals' for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are of an excellent quality, showing detailed and helpful records of children's past work.
- Home-school diaries, particularly for the youngest pupils, are used very well. They are regularly shared with parents to provide valuable information about pupils' achievements and personal development.
- Learning usually moves at a brisk pace and communication aids, including technology, are often used well to help pupils respond to questions and make choices. In a very few lessons, the use of communication aids is not planned for and they are not used well enough to promote independence in making choices.
- Specialist teaching and high quality provision for subjects such as food technology, music, swimming and therapies ensure that pupils achieve well in these areas.
- Teachers make effective use of the rich variety of activities on offer to promote pupils' good personal development. Provision for therapies is strong and ensures that pupils' welfare needs are fully met.
- Outreach support is successful in enabling local schools to include pupils fully in the life of their

school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils on all three sites enjoy school. Most are polite and helpful and show their enthusiasm by eagerly sharing their activities with adults and joining in with their peers. Those who find engaging with others difficult, because of their autism, are provided with alternative tasks which generally help them to settle.
- A group of pupils who spoke to the inspector said they are taught how to stay safe and how to walk away from situations that might be unsafe. They said they feel safe at school.
- No evidence of any bullying was seen during the inspection and none is evident in the school's records. Older pupils told the inspectors that there is no bullying of any kind at the school.
- Most pupils understand the importance of keeping fit and healthy. They all have regular opportunities to take part in dance, drama and swimming. A group of primary pupils told the inspector that almost all of them learn to swim by the time they leave Year 6.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and is above that found in other special schools even though many pupils have high numbers of medical appointments.
- Pupil's personal development is very well promoted through regular community trips, residential experiences, including visits to Europe, and links with local schools.
- There is a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and there are examples of pupils, who have difficulties with their emotional and social skills, improving their behaviour because of clearly specified plans and approaches.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the school's own recent questionnaires rightly say that behaviour at the school is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through celebrations from different cultures, through music and drama and through assemblies and regular visits into the community. Older pupils regularly cook and eat foods from different countries.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders manage the performance of staff well. They have ensured that all staff attend high-quality training with some additional subject specific, and behaviour and safety training being tailored to specific staff roles. For example, a 'leading teacher' programme has led to the high quality phonics programme that is having a good impact on pupils' literacy skills.
- Leaders at all levels are fully involved in improving teaching and seeking excellence. Regular monitoring with careful and thorough feedback shows the commitment to improvement.
- Leaders work diligently to maintain positive behaviour throughout the school. The strong commitment to supporting the very individual needs of each pupil means that each pupil has their own individual programme along with the specific support required to successfully complete it. As a result there is full inclusion.
- Leaders have a clear picture of how well each pupil achieves. However, they do not yet use this information to check how well the different groups of pupils in the school are doing.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding achieve well because the extra funds are used to employ additional staffing to meet these pupils' individual needs.
- There is an exciting and wide range of activities that fully meets the needs and abilities of all pupils. Enrichment opportunities extend pupils' learning and personal development well.
- The local authority gives effective support to the school, especially in training staff and helping to improve teaching.
- Staff are extremely supportive of leaders. All those who responded to the inspection questionnaires said that they were proud to be a member of staff at the school.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils have equal access to all the opportunities available. No evidence of

any discrimination was seen during the inspection and none was evident in records.

■ Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body gives clear direction to the school, promoting good-quality values and an environment in which pupils thrive. Governors are supportive and provide regular challenge to leaders. They evaluate the school's strengths and areas for improvement, receiving regular updates and reports, and have a secure awareness of the school's performance compared to that of similar schools. They understand the importance of managing the performance of staff and allocate sufficient funding to good-quality training to ensure that teaching continues to improve. They manage the school's finances well and make sure additional money allocated for the support of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium benefits those pupils. Governors understand the importance of maintaining the good quality of teaching. Effective teachers are rewarded through the school's performance management structure and any underperformance is tackled through additional training and regular monitoring.

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	123345
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	402150

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	2–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Lloyd
Headteacher	Stephen Passey
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 May 2010
Telephone number	0118 9724311
Fax number	0118 9242730
Email address	Stephen.passey@bishopswoodschool.net

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