

# The John Fielding Community Special School

Ashlawn Drive, Boston, PE21 9PX

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The headteacher is clear about what the school needs to do to improve and works hard so that it does.
- Governors visit regularly so they know what to do to help her and also to challenge her about the work of the school.
- Teaching is generally good so that pupils of all ages make good and sometimes outstanding progress from when they join the school.
- The school successfully uses different ways of helping pupils to communicate so that they can all join in their lessons. Staff have the training they need to make sure everyone has the same chance, whatever their difficulties.
- Pupils enjoy school and show they feel safe there. They are mostly well behaved in lessons and through the day. Staff work together effectively to manage any difficult behaviour, so that lessons run smoothly.
- The school goes out of its way to make sure there is a good relationship with parents. This means parents feel happy their children are well cared for and are having a good education. They are right behind the work of the headteacher.
- The sixth form is good and provides a wide range of opportunities to prepare students for life beyond school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few difficulties with staff absence have meant the headteacher has not always had all the support she needed to improve the school as much as she knows it could.
- Teaching assistants who take lessons are not always given all the support they need.
- Although teaching is usually good, very occasionally it can be a little slow and some more-able pupils sometimes have work that may be too easy.
- Staff do not have enough opportunity to share best practice either in school or through visiting other similar schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons, all of which were seen together with the headteacher. The inspector also listened to pupils read, looked at their work and visited them at lunch and break times.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, parents, pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, teachers, higher-level teaching assistants and a group of other teaching assistants. She also met with a representative from the local authority and spoke by telephone with a consultant who works with the school.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to give any information. However, the inspector took account of the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views, as well as questionnaires filled in by staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of school information about how the school checks pupils' progress, behaviour and safety as well as records about staff performance.

## Inspection team

Debra McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The John Fielding Community is a small special school for pupils with severe to profound multiple learning difficulties. It is part of the Boston Learning Network.
- An increasing number of pupils also have autistic-spectrum disorders and complex medical problems. A small number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties have joined the school later in their school careers.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are only very few in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Some pupils take part in lessons at St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School and sixth formers attend Boston College one day a week.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or with a parent in the armed forces).
- The majority of pupils are from a White British Background and speak English as their first language. However, there are a growing number of pupils who speak other languages.
- The local authority pays for an outreach teacher at the school to support pupils with special educational needs in mainstream primary and some secondary schools.
- The school has Sportsmark and Activemark Awards, the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and the International Schools Award.

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

- Develop teachers' roles more fully so they are able to take greater responsibility for helping senior leaders and governors build on the school's strengths by:
  - identifying and supporting those teachers who have the skills to become future school leaders
  - fully including those teachers in checking how well the school is doing and planning for the future
  - making sure there is a very clear line of responsibility within the school's management when senior staff are absent.
- Make more teaching outstanding by:
  - giving the more-able pupils work that challenges them to do their best
  - keeping a very close eye on lessons that are planned and taught regularly by teaching assistants, to make sure they have all the help they need, to teach the right things, check accurately how well pupils have done and what they need to learn next
  - allowing more time for both teachers and teaching assistants to spend time in each other's lessons to find out what works best
  - visiting other similar special schools to find successful new ideas.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The school's records show all pupils and groups of pupils make equally good progress compared to similar pupils nationally, whatever their difficulties. Often this progress is outstanding.
- Children make a particularly good start in the primary department. This is because staff work well together, making sure children have the right experiences to prepare them for school life. They learn to take turns, make choices, and to understand what will happen next. This is especially useful for children with autism-spectrum disorder. Pupils with complex medical conditions also have their needs well met.
- Staff are especially good at helping pupils with communication difficulties use other ways of expressing themselves. This has enabled them to make the same progress as their classmates. There was less emphasis on reading for the more-able pupils, but changes have been made to remedy this.
- Although secondary pupils often read in lessons and have reading books to take home, they would benefit from still further opportunities to read. Plans for new reading books and a school library are likely to speed up this process.
- Staff use valuable and practical advice from physiotherapy and occupational health therapists to support their sensory approach to help pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties reach their targets. Practical mathematics and literacy skills are integrated into lessons for those with autism-spectrum disorders so they can regularly practice and improve these skills.
- Secondary pupils and sixth formers benefit from a range of outdoor experiences through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. It helps improve their reading and mathematics skills, for example checking the nutritional guidance on cereal packets to work out how much energy they will need for a two-day walk. Accredited courses for sixth form that are relevant and practical, together with attendance at Boston College, prepare them well for the future. The school is developing horticulture and other projects to increase the work-experience projects already available.
- Senior leaders regularly check how well pupils are doing using a special computer program. This showed them a few pupils had not done quite so well in some science lessons and also that teachers needed to do some more work on helping a small number of pupils improve their writing. Now this has been done they have been able to catch up.
- The pupil premium has been used very well to help eligible pupils. Children in primary with autism-spectrum disorders have had extra adult help, leading to better behaviour and achievement. Pupils with physical difficulties make better progress in lessons as extra physiotherapy has made them more independent. Secondary pupils have had more support at college, raising their academic achievement.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good and this was observed during the inspection. The headteacher regularly checks teaching to make sure it is as good as it should be and sometimes finds it to be

outstanding. These checks have been harder to carry out because of some staff absence.

- The very good relationships between staff and pupils play a major part in why pupils learn so well. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to please staff. Also, when teachers have high expectations pupils respond accordingly.
- Teachers usually use questioning very well to check how much pupils have understood and push them a little further, so they think about their answers more deeply. Very occasionally lessons are too slow and a few more-able older pupils are not stretched as much as they could be.
- The best teaching occurs when staff give pupils just the right amount of time to absorb what they have learnt and then move quickly onto the next stage. Activities are well planned for individuals to build carefully on what they have learnt before, so they can be successful at each small step.
- This is particularly the case with the youngest children where a range of approaches is used very successfully. For example in one lesson about colour, everyone felt orange fabrics, put their fingers in orange paint and looked at orange-coloured objects, but the teacher's careful planning meant another colour was ready to be introduced for those children who might be able to move to the next step.
- Pupils are encouraged to think about how well they have done. Primary pupils told the teacher how much help they thought they needed in a food technology lesson, using different coloured smiley faces, while older students are encouraged to do this verbally if they can, for example when assessing their course work in sixth form.
- Teaching assistants at all levels make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching, both in the skilled support they give to teachers and sometimes by planning for and teaching groups. However, they do not always have all the support they need to do this as best they can.

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

- Pupils show they feel safe by the happy way they come to school each morning and through their obviously trusting relationships with staff. This was also reflected in the questionnaires parents and pupils filled in and in the meetings the inspector held with them.
  - The school works closely with health professionals and other agencies to make sure pupils are kept safe and well. Pupils with medical conditions are very well cared for. All the correct systems make sure any problems are quickly identified and put right.
  - Because pupils enjoy school and have good relationships with staff, they are mostly well behaved in lessons and at play. Some pupils do experience problems with their behaviour because of their learning difficulties, but staff are well trained in managing this and work effectively together to make sure plans are put into place to improve it. The school's records show that most pupils make good progress in improving their behaviour, especially those with autistic-spectrum disorder.
  - However, the school has found the way it records behavioural incidents is rather unwieldy and that sometimes it does not pinpoint exactly what has made a pupil behave in a particular way. The school is looking at making this more focused and less time consuming for staff.
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- Bullying, as it is usually understood, does not happen because of the pupils' learning difficulties. Pupils were seen to play happily alongside each other at break times and staff help them play ball and other games together.
- Pupils also behave well elsewhere, such as visits to other schools and colleges, residential and trips into town. They contribute to their community, for example by taking responsibility for flowerbeds in the town park.
- The school makes sure discrimination of any kind does not happen. The different teaching approaches mean everyone has an equal chance to do well. Pupils learn about the world around them through assemblies and lessons.
- As well as staff making sure everything is in place to keep them safe, pupils learn about safety themselves, for example being careful with knives in food technology lessons. Older pupils learn about health-and-safety rules as part of their coursework. The more able learn to be careful on the internet.
- The school keeps a close watch on pupils' attendance because although it has improved, in the past it has occasionally been quite low for a few pupils. It has good systems for keeping track of pupils' absence as their medical conditions mean they can sometimes be too ill to come to school.

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

- The dedicated and hardworking headteacher knows what the school needs to do to improve further and has detailed plans to put these ideas into place. She has good methods of identifying what is going well in school and what needs to be changed. For example, the school has made great strides in developing pupils' literacy following changes to how this is taught and organised.
  - Her resolve to move the school forwards, however, is sometimes constrained by long-term staff absence at a senior level and occasionally she is unable to make the changes she knows are needed as quickly as she would like, particularly in her efforts to make teaching always the best it can be. There is not enough coaching of up-and-coming potential leaders on the staff to encourage them to take on greater responsibility and ease some of the burden on the headteacher.
  - The local authority is working closely and effectively with the headteacher on focused areas of school improvement which is already leading to further improvements in the quality of teaching
  - Staff and parents are very supportive of the work of the school because they are kept well informed about day-to-day events. They are full of praise for the difference the school has made to their children's lives.
  - The stimulating topics are regularly reviewed to make sure they meet the needs of every pupil. This approach makes lessons fun and means pupils enjoy them. Skills in mathematics and reading and writing are taught separately, but also in other lessons too, such as counting how many slices are needed to make a sandwich in food technology.
  - The pupil premium makes a real difference to the experiences of eligible pupils. For example,
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secondary pupils benefit from the additional support they receive at college, boosting their confidence so that they feel able to take part in residential adventure holidays.

- Whenever possible, outside visitors such as theatre groups are brought in, or special events organised, like Science Week. Assemblies and visits from local clergy give opportunities for spiritual reflection.
- Pupils are able to take part in a variety of cultural activities, such as the weekly French Club. Further afield they join in sporting competitions with other similar schools and during the inspection won the county special school curling championship, proudly displaying the cup in the school foyer.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has made sure its visits have been focused on specific aspects of the school's work, so that it has been able to both challenge the headteacher and give informed support.
  - The governing body has reorganized so it is now more effective and has first-hand evidence about how well teachers are doing and the relationship between this and their pay. They know how the school deals with any underperformance and sets robust targets for teachers to improve their work. Governors have a good grasp of the school's finances and know what a difference the pupil premium has made to eligible pupils. They make sure all the requirements for safeguarding children are met.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120751
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405959
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<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>	45
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	14
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Pichel-Juan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Morrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01205 363395
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