

# Stephen Hawking School

Brunton Place, London, E14 7LL

**Inspection dates** 5–6 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The school ensures that the strengths of each pupil are built on very carefully to encourage and enable pupils to learn as quickly as possible.
- Almost all pupils make much faster progress than other pupils nationally and especially pupils in similar schools. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress in their communication and independence skills.
- Teachers are extremely skilled in precisely adapting learning to stretch the pupils while maintaining excellent records of every small step in their progress.
- Standards of care and support are exemplary. Pupils are happy and relaxed. They look forward to school and arrive with smiles of anticipation. Their attitudes to adults and other children are caring and positive, and their behaviour is excellent.
- The well-established senior team works tirelessly to monitor and evaluate all aspects of provision to ensure that pupils make excellent progress.
- The monitoring of teaching is rigorous. The management of the performance of all staff is extremely well organised and robust. This ensures that teaching standards have continued to improve since the previous inspection.
- The governing body provides exceptional challenge and support to the school. Governors have an excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and remaining areas for development.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons and parts of lessons, all of which were joint observations with a member of the senior staff.
- Meetings were held with staff, health professionals and therapists who work at the school and governors, and a telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View survey to be included but inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the school’s own questionnaire to parents and carers undertaken in January 2013. The 48 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation, including self-evaluation and development planning, records of the pupils’ progress since the previous inspection, and monitoring reports on the standards of teaching. Inspectors also scrutinised records about pupils’ behaviour and attendance, and all procedures relating to their safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or multi-sensory impairments.
- There is an ethnically diverse population, comprised mainly of pupils from Bangladeshi origins as well as pupils from White British and Somali backgrounds. A higher proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- There are two Nursery classes and one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families.
- There is a well-established leadership team and governing body.

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

- Ensure that data on pupils' performance are presented in a clearer format so that their progress can be reviewed more quickly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Although pupils' attainment remains very low because of their learning difficulties, the achievement of the overwhelming majority of pupils is outstanding, and in most cases is much better than that found nationally for children with their level of disability. The excellent progress noted in the previous inspection has been improved on still further. The school maintains exceptionally detailed and voluminous records of pupils' progress.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in their communication through skilled teaching, the expert input of a range of therapists and sensitive but precise use of a range of additional aids to improve their communication. Younger children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning to respond to all aspects of their learning by specific movements, facial expression and the early use of symbols. The rapid progress of all pupils in communication has a considerable impact on their confidence and interest in activities and promotes their learning extremely well.
- There are no differences in the performance of different groups, including those who are learning English as an additional language. This is because the needs of each pupil are precisely assessed and mapped, and the teaching of communication pervades every aspect of the pupils' education, including play and lunchtime activities. The school maintains at its heart the equal opportunity of every child to succeed at his or her own level. There is no discrimination between pupils.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make excellent progress. The funding has been spent appropriately to ensure that the most able are stretched to the best of their ability and to combat the extra barrier of severe sensory disability that some pupils face.
- All pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. After a very good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, pupils gradually learn to anticipate and use their growing communication skills to express their wishes and make choices, for instance in the type of fruit they would like at snack time. As a result, they gain confidence and independence skills, which benefit them as they move to the next stage in their education.
- Pupils are given interesting activities consistently, and express their interest and curiosity about objects, sights and sounds introduced by the teacher, which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. They tolerate and look forward to the company of adults and their friends, and contribute as much as they can to the school, for instance through the school council.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- The quality of teaching, which was judged outstanding in the previous inspection, has continued to rise because of the rigorous and sustained monitoring of teachers' work, accompanied by a high level of tailored training for teachers and other adults in each aspect of this specialised work.
- Teachers use their extensive skills to adapt precisely each pupil's learning to provide challenge but also to build consistently on what each child knows and understands. As a result, pupils make rapid and sustained progress over time.
- Teachers know their pupils' abilities and learning needs exceptionally well. The quality of assessment of pupils' progress is exemplary. Staff record in detail every aspect of the pupils' response to activities and each very small step in progress. Teachers use this information to create exceptionally well-focused and precise short-term goals for their pupils.
- Adults have high expectations of their pupils' achievement and ensure these expectations are realised through sensitive teaching and high levels of structured individual support. The pupils' learning goals are adjusted sometimes daily to make sure they achieve as well as they possibly can.

- Literacy and numeracy are taught extremely well. Teachers continually emphasise communication, using a variety of objects, symbols and spoken language. Pupils gradually learn to recognise pictures of objects and sometimes symbols, and they are given every opportunity to practise their skills in mark making and painting to aid their fine-motor skills.
- Lessons are always interesting and well resourced. Teachers make excellent use of visual and oral cues, such as whiteboards, signing and pictures of objects. As a result, pupils maintain their interest and concentration for relatively long periods. They make good eye contact and look forward enormously to classroom activities.
- The highly effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is characterised by exemplary planning and assessment, and sensitive and enthusiastic teaching by all the adults.

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

- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent. Pupils invariably try their best and have very strong, positive relations with other children and adults.
- Parents, carers and staff are without exception extremely positive about the pupils' enjoyment of school, their behaviour and the high quality of care they receive. Pupils feel very safe. All the procedures for safeguarding them are extremely well organised and effective. School nurses are constantly in attendance, and the administration of health and safety is excellent, as are child protection procedures.
- Bullying or racially motivated incidents are unknown. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The school has a very happy and harmonious family atmosphere where every child is known well and treated as someone special by all staff.
- The pupils' love of school is demonstrated by their relatively high levels of attendance. Some pupils are unavoidably absent through chronic illness, but they attend whenever they can.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed exceptionally well. Teachers, support staff, therapists and parents and carers all contribute to construct detailed plans to help pupils understand their own behaviour and to encourage them to make the best choice in their conduct. Pupils have precise targets in their individual education plans or in specific behaviour monitoring records.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The experience, expertise and commitment of the headteacher enable him to inspire his senior team and teachers consistently to improve pupils' achievement and teaching standards. The school has an excellent track record, but is never complacent. It consistently strives to get better through rigorous monitoring, self-evaluation and sharply focused development planning. The school has secure capacity to continue this improvement.
- Leaders focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning. Teachers are supported particularly well through the performance management arrangements, which consistently challenge them to improve their work. This is accompanied by high levels of specific training.
- The expertise of staff is known and appreciated by other schools across the local authority. Teachers provide highly valued outreach work in a growing number of mainstream primary schools. Staff morale is high and one teacher spoke for many when she commented, 'We are lucky to work here.'
- Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and amended as a result of self-evaluation. Senior staff have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. There are, for example, very detailed procedures for teaching communication, for assessment and the promotion of literacy. Teachers use these procedures consistently, which has a noticeable impact on the pupils' excellent progress.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils extremely well. Detailed schemes of work ensure that pupils experience a broad and balanced timetable through suitable topics. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is very well adjusted to promote the children's communication,

experience of creative subjects and mathematical development. This provision is led and managed particularly well.

- All pupils benefit from very well-resourced and imaginative outdoor play facilities. A wide range of trips into the community extends the pupils' understanding of social occasions and stimulates their imagination. Activities are exceptionally well adapted to take account of the learning needs of each pupil and this greatly increases the pupils' interest and concentration and helps them to make rapid progress.
- The assessment of pupils' learning is a fundamental strength of the school. The sheer volume of the highly detailed and effective assessment sometimes prevents the school from demonstrating the pupils' progress as clearly as possible, as the senior team are well aware.
- The school maintains excellent relations with parents and carers. They are greeted warmly when they visit and information to parents and carers in newsletters is very well received, for instance in promoting the many courses the school offers to parents and carers on aspects of helping their child more successfully. Parents and carers are given detailed accounts of their child's progress and well-being through the Annual Review process.
- Partnerships with other schools, through the outreach programme, are excellent. The school's work is highly thought of by schools and by the local authority, which provides 'light touch' support because of its confidence in the quality of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors visit regularly to talk to staff, parents, carers and children. They have a very clear grasp of the school's work and consistently challenge the school to improve yet further. Governors are fully informed on performance management arrangements, how good teaching is rewarded and what is done to eradicate underperformance. The governing body receives regular updates on pupils' performance and has a good understanding of how the school compares with schools locally and nationally. Governors take part in regular training, often provided by the school's staff. Nominated governors effectively monitor safeguarding and health and safety procedures and ensure that statutory requirements are met. They maintain a close interest in how pupil premium money is spent and how successfully the school is promoting the achievement of the pupils who receive it.

## 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>	131023
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	403816

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
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	95
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susie Gilvin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Rayner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17–18 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7423 9848
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