

# Fountaindale School

Nottingham Road, Mansfield, NG18 5BA

**Inspection dates** 12–14 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience/Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Fountaindale School has improved since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders know the school very well. They regularly review and amend the work of the school and drive improvements forward at a good pace.
- Pupils make at least good progress in all areas of their work. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children make outstanding progress. By the time they join Key Stage 1, they have made impressive gains in their learning.
- The governing body plays a very active part in supporting the school. Governors know the school well and are clear about where it can continue to improve.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is exemplary. From the time they start at the school, they make impressive improvements in their personal development due to the high-quality support and guidance they receive.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The monitoring of the quality of teaching is not as effective as it could be. This is because leaders, except the Principal, are not involved in observing the quality of teaching and checking judgements.
- Although the school's judgement of teaching overall is accurate, there has been a tendency for individual lessons to be judged slightly over-generously.
- The systems for tracking the progress that pupils make have recently been improved. However, it is too early to see the impact of how teachers use the new information to help them plan their teaching more effectively.
- The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools which have not been met.

## Information about this inspection

- This was a no-notice integrated inspection whereby the school was informed of the inspection shortly before the arrival of the inspectors. The inspection was scheduled as the result of concerns raised around behaviour management and pupil safety.
- The inspection started at lunchtime on the first day and finished at lunchtime on the third day. During this inspection, the Principal was absent due to illness and the Head of the School was the senior member of staff available.
- Documents were scrutinised and discussions held with the Head of School, other senior staff and the local authority around the concerns which triggered the inspection.
- Ten lessons were observed and pupils' learning and progress were also evaluated by looking at their work and through case studies.
- Meetings were held with the Head of School and other members of the leadership team, the head of care, the lead teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of teaching assistants. Pupils' views were obtained in a meeting with the school council and informal conversations with other pupils during the inspection.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including the school's data about pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, the minutes of governing body meetings, the school's monitoring of teaching, and attendance data. Inspectors also scrutinised documents related to safeguarding and child protection.
- There were not enough responses by parents to the Parent View survey for it to provide additional evidence for this inspection.
- The social care inspector regulatory inspector spent time with pupils in the residence in the evening and early morning. She also held a range of meetings with members of the care and health staff.

## Inspection team

David Muir, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Louisa Bayley

Social Care Inspector

Christine Bray

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Fountaindale School is an average-sized special school which provides education for pupils with physical disabilities, complex medical conditions and associated learning difficulties, including sensory impairment and profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs
- The school serves the whole of Nottinghamshire and has some pupils on roll from other local authorities.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school operates the local authority's Physical Disability Support Service and provides advice, support and training to other schools. It also operates the local authority's Health Related Education Team, which provides a hospital and home education service for children across the authority who are unable to attend school due to health reasons.
- The school has a residence, which offers overnight stays for pupils for one or two nights a week. There is a maximum of six residential beds at any time.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above the national average. This is extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The last social care inspection was in November 2012 and judged the residential provision to be outstanding. The previous education inspection took place in February 2011.

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

- Ensure that a higher proportion of teaching in the school is outstanding by involving more leaders in assessing the quality of teaching, and developing systems to moderate judgements through shared lesson observations.
- Embed the new data systems to ensure that the challenging targets which are set are appropriate and that pupils are given the best possible opportunities to reach them.
- The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.
  - Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards') (NMS 14.1)
  - All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance. (NMS 19.6).
  - The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who does not work at, or directly manage, the school, to visit the school once every half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the headteacher (or school equivalent) (NMS 20.1)
- To improve further, the school should consider the following points for improvement:
  - Provide detail on fire evacuation records to record the staff and pupils who participated, the nature of any issues during the evacuation and how they were followed up, to provide a clear

picture of the effectiveness of drills

- Implement a system to provide a clear audit trail of complaints received, the action taken and the outcome.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress overall, and some make outstanding progress. Most pupils make or exceed the progress expected of them. Although targets were already ambitious previously, the school has recently brought in new systems, with the support of the local authority. These systems compare pupils' progress to the top 25% of pupils in the country who are working at the same levels for their age.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress measured from when they start to when they enter Key Stage 1.
- Pupils make more progress in English than in mathematics. The school is aware of this and has plans to tackle the difference. Progress in these subjects is still at least good, and specialist teaching assistants in English and mathematics support teachers well. Pupils are supported well in learning to read, where appropriate, and they are able to use a range of techniques when they read new words for the first time.
- In other areas, including life skills and the promotion of independence, the school has significant strengths. The students in the 14–19 groups work to gain the Toward Independence qualification. As a result of this focus, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their lives.
- The school offers a choice of external accreditations and qualifications. This includes GCSEs for the higher attaining pupils, Entry Level Certificates, ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) awards and Functional Skills qualifications. All pupils who left school last year gained accreditation. The school is continually reviewing the courses available to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils in the school.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding make the same good progress as other pupils. The funding is spent on support, including through after-school clubs to improve pupils' social and communication skills and so boost their literacy and pre-literacy skills. Leaders monitor this group, and other groups, of pupils closely showing that there is no difference in the progress made by the different groups of pupils in the school.
- Communication is a strong focus of the school's work and pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in this area of their development. The wide range of communication options available to pupils meets their needs well and gives them opportunities to employ different methods and to interact with their peers irrespective of their communication choices.

### The quality of teaching is good

- All of the teaching seen during the inspection was at least good; nearly half was outstanding.
- The quality of pupils' work shows that good teaching leads to good learning in individual lessons and over longer periods of time. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress as teaching in that stage is consistently outstanding.
- Clear learning plans link previous learning with what is being learnt now and what is to be learnt next. During lessons, staff check how much learning is going on and they use this information to plan the next steps for the pupils. Recent amendments to the systems for setting targets for pupils have not yet had an impact in making teachers even more proficient in this aspect of their

work.

- In the best lessons, the level of individualised work is very high. This ensures that all the tasks and expected learning is matched extremely well to pupils' needs and abilities. Pupils are continually challenged and, where support is needed, it is provided very well. Where independence is required, pupils are given numerous opportunities to work on their own.
- In all lessons, there are high expectations and levels of challenge for all pupils. They are actively engaged in their learning because teachers make the lessons relevant and accessible and they make the learning enjoyable. There are high levels of trust between staff and pupils, which means that pupils feel comfortable about making mistakes and learning from them well.
- Learning support assistants play an extremely valuable and active part in supporting learning by working with individual pupils or groups, improving communication and assessing the pupils' work to help the teachers with their planning. Their two distinct roles of helping with the physical aspects of pupils' development and also supporting learning are clear, and teachers use these roles well.

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

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy their time in the school and they say that they feel safe there. They are welcoming and show mature attitudes to visitors and to each other.
- Pupils are treated with the utmost dignity and respect at all times. Staff are extremely considerate about the pupils' personal rights and space. Pupils are given responsibilities and these are well thought-out so that they help support their development. The school council is an example of this. All students are given the chance to stand for election and all pupils choose their class representative through a vote.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is evident in all aspects of the school's work. During their time in the school, pupils increasingly understand the difference between right and wrong, and what types of behaviour are acceptable in different situations. Links with other schools give pupils opportunities to learn about other people. The signing choir which takes place regularly at lunchtime is impressive as it shows the inclusive approach that the school has to its pupils. Additionally, it also shows that this inclusive attitude is fully valued by the pupils.
- Records show that incidents of racism or other prejudice-based bullying do not happen in the school. Students clearly show tolerance and understanding about those who come from backgrounds different to them. This view is underpinned by the strong focus on the rights of every individual to reach their potential. Furthermore, this trait is followed through, so that pupils seek out opportunities to help and support each other throughout the school day.
- Residential staff promote pupils' safety well through comprehensive risk assessments, good levels of supervision and appropriate responses to child protection issues. Health and safety requirements are met and staff receive training to ensure that child protection and safeguarding is an absolute priority. Where concerns arise, staff follow them up well. Fire evacuations take place on a regular basis and pupils have comprehensive personal emergency evacuation plans in place. However, records of evacuations do not provide details of the staff and pupils involved.
- It is unusual to see disruption to learning in the school and this is shown by the low numbers of recorded incidents over time. The school is very clear about the differences in how it responds to

pupils who occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour due to their special educational needs and those who are choosing to be naughty.

- Staff enjoy working in the school. This is clear as they go about their work in an extremely positive way, modelling positive and inclusive behaviour and showing high levels of care and concern for the well-being of all pupils. Staff questionnaires also show an overwhelming satisfaction from staff, with typical comments being: 'This is a very happy, special place to work' and 'a fantastic school to teach at, I am very proud to work here'.

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

- Concerns which triggered this unannounced inspection were investigated. Inspectors were satisfied that the school acts appropriately when managing pupils' behaviour. It is clear that safety and dignity are paramount when considering pupils' needs. In addition, leaders have followed procedures well and they take appropriate action related to staff conduct where this is needed. Leaders also analyse the school's work regularly and learn from this, to ensure that any future incidents are handled even more appropriately.
- The school's records show that the Principal, who monitors the quality of teaching through lesson observations, knows what good teaching looks like. During this inspection, it was not possible to undertake joint lesson observations due to the absence of the Principal. Although the recent restructuring of leadership roles and responsibilities is placing more focus on the quality of teaching and learning, lesson observations are not undertaken by other senior leaders so there is not a shared responsibility for judging the quality of teaching
- The school has established links with other schools to ensure that they are making correct judgments about the quality of pupils' work.
- The residential provision is well organised, by an experienced and qualified manager. Residential staff receive the required training and their experience is underpinned by relevant qualifications. New staff complete a thorough induction. However, not all residence staff have received regular supervision to support them in their roles.
- The work of all staff, including the Principal, is subject to detailed systems to manage their performance. Where relevant, these are related to the recently published national *Teachers' Standards* and there is a clear focus on the progress made by pupils. Targets are challenging and teachers are expected to assess the quality of their performance against the standards. Although appropriate training is provided for staff, a very small number of support staff indicated in their staff questionnaire responses that they would like more opportunities to receive further training.
- The school's strong range of subjects meets the needs of all pupils, in the school and residence, and is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to do so. Because of this, pupils are extremely well prepared when they move on to the next stage of their lives. They are well prepared for transition and all pupils are supported well through this period of turbulence for them and their families. The school is currently reviewing its systems to make the transition period longer, so that pupils with more complex needs are given sufficient time to understand the changes.
- From Year 9 onwards, the school organises 'person centred reviews'. These enable pupils to take a far more active role in planning for their future. They also provide opportunities for all people involved with the care of the young person to contribute effectively and have their views heard. These systems demonstrate the strong links there are between the school and other local

authority support services for the benefit of all pupils. The school also provides individual support for parents and carers and is pro-active in seeking out information about events happening in other communities and passing this on to families.

- There are systems to monitor the conduct of the school and the quality of the residential provision. However, visits do not take place on a half-termly basis as required by the National Minimum Standards. The school addresses and investigates complaints and provides a detailed response in both the residential and education provisions. However, there is no system in place to provide a summary of complaints and the effectiveness of the actions taken.
- The local authority knows the school well and provides appropriate support. This is highly valued by the school’s leaders. There are clear, open lines of communication so that advice can be sought on how to improve further. A recent example of this is the input provided about how the school can improve its data collection systems.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has continued to hold leaders to account well. It knows the school very well and understands what the school needs to do to continue to improve. The governing body is provided with clear information about the performance of the school. Governors ask questions which appropriately challenge leaders and hold them to account for the performance of the school. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are well known by staff and pupils. The governing body reviews policies regularly and also plays an active part in developing the school improvement plan. This has been a significant factor in ensuring that the school continues to improve and to seek new ways of working, based on research. Governors know very well about the performance of staff and pupils. They monitor the work of staff, including the headteacher, and are closely involved in making decisions about salary progression and promotion. Salary progression is based on an extremely rigorous and exacting set of criteria to ensure that only those who are performing to the highest of expectations progress.

<b>Outcomes for residential pupils</b>	<b>are outstanding</b>
<b>Quality of residential provision and care</b>	<b>is outstanding</b>
<b>Residential pupils’ safety</b>	<b>is adequate</b>
<b>Leadership and management of the residential provision</b>	<b>is good</b>

- All residential pupils are treated with exceptional levels of dignity and respect. They are empowered to make choices about the way staff manage their health needs and their views are integral to their care planning. Residential staff advocate strongly on behalf of residential pupils, promoting their rights to enjoy equality of access to life-enhancing opportunities and experiences.
- Parents of pupils who board at the school give very positive feedback about the provision, which they say is excellent. They say their children develop socially as a result of having the opportunity to mix with peers, which they would not otherwise experience after the school day.
- Residential pupils develop skills to become as independent as possible, given their individual needs and complex health issues. This encompasses becoming self-managing in aspects of personal care, eating independently, making choices, unpacking their suitcases and learning to wash and dry up. Parents say their children make excellent progress as a result of the provision.



- Pupils who have greater levels of understanding, mobility and verbal communication are supportive of those who do not have the same abilities. They are alert to each other's moods and do not judge or become frustrated when others are not able to communicate with them.
- The school follows procedures to check and vet the suitability of adults who have access to pupils. However, there is a lack of rigour in ensuring that all checks are followed up and information recorded to show that the checks are satisfactory. This has the potential to compromise safety and is a shortfall against national minimum standard 14.1.
- The nature of pupils' complex health needs is such that they require detailed health care plans and intervention from a range of health professionals. The school works with the health team to develop highly individual programmes that take account of medical intervention, therapies, personal care and postural care. Consequently, pupils have comprehensive care and health plans agreed between the school, the health team and parents. This means that all aspects of pupils' physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing are supported.
- Pupils receive an excellent level of support, both on admission and when they move on. Staff are particularly sensitive to the anxiety that transition both in and out of the school can cause for parents. Comprehensive information sharing, pre-admission visits, gradual introduction to the school and residence, meetings and home visits take place prior to admission. This helps pupils to settle in and build relationships with staff. On leaving the school, transitions take into account the fact that pupils have often been at the school for a long time, many years in most cases. Consequently, staff promote positive disengagement. This means that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

## What inspection judgements mean

<b>School</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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>

<b>Boarding/Residential provision</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122947
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC402858
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	420324

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community Special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<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>	60
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	16
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	9
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carol Knowles
<b>Principal</b>	Mark Dengel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01623 792671
<b>Fax number</b>	01623 792671
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