

# Bennerley Fields Specialist Speech and Language College

Stratford Street, Cotmanhay, Ilkeston, DE7 8QZ

**Inspection dates** 13–14 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching has improved a great deal over the last year. All classes now receive at least some good teaching. However some lessons still require improvement. This is partly because teachers teach a lot of different subjects and they teach some better than others.
- In Key Stage 4 students' achievement requires improvement because there is not enough good teaching and the students do not have clear enough targets for each subject.
- Senior leaders have really improved the way in which pupils' learning is assessed but so far pupils only have targets for mathematics and English and not for other areas of learning. Leaders have compared pupils' work within school to check that assessment is accurate but have not yet looked at how judgements compare with other schools.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school has improved enormously over the last year. The headteacher has very high expectations. She makes it very clear that she wants all pupils to learn as well as they can. She has challenged staff to improve their work, and they have. The senior leaders help the headteacher a great deal.
- Children make a very good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Many pupils are making good progress, particularly with their reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills.
- Many lessons are interesting, exciting and meet pupils' needs well. Pupils have a good range of experiences in school and off-site each week.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. Their involvement in school life is excellent and they take a lot of responsibility.
- Governors support and challenge the school very well. They spend a considerable time on their roles and have really helped the school to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in five lessons, four of which were joint observations with a member of the senior leadership team. She visited parts of five other lessons and pupils' interactive demonstration of their learning from 'Red Nose Week', to which parents and carers were also invited.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and staff, including the speech and language therapist. She met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and with a representative from the local authority. She talked to pupils about their work, views and experiences throughout two days.
- She examined a range of documents provided by the school, including the school's monitoring of teaching and learning and behaviour, the school's assessment information, and governors' monitoring documents.
- The inspector also drew on evidence from previous monitoring visits.

## Inspection team

Sue Morris-King, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.*

### Information about this school

- When Bennerley Fields was inspected in January 2012 it was judged to require special measures because it was not providing an acceptable standard of education. The current headteacher had been in post for only three weeks at that point. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors monitored the school in June and November 2012 to evaluate whether it was making sufficient progress towards being removed from special measures.
- Bennerley Fields caters for children and young people with special educational needs, aged from 2-16. All pupils in the main school have a statement of special educational needs. The Nursery offers part-time places for up to 12 children whose needs are still being formally assessed.
- Almost half the pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. Some have severe or moderate learning difficulties, physical disabilities, speech, language and communication needs or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- All pupils on roll are White British. An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funds to support particular pupils, including looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals). Several pupils are looked after.
- The school has a specialism in speech, language and communication. Two speech and language therapists, between them, are based at the school full time, and an occupational therapist is based at the school part time.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or outstanding and enables all pupils to make accelerated progress by:
  - extending staff's skills and confidence so that they are equally competent at teaching all the subjects that they need to
  - challenging and supporting all pupils to take a full and active part in each lesson
  - ensuring that lessons contain a balance of work for pupils with a member of staff and independent or group work that is suitable for each pupil's needs.
- Improve provision and outcomes at Key Stage 4 by:
  - setting suitably challenging targets for all students, using the same process as the rest of the school
  - using these to assess whether students are making enough progress, and intervening quickly if they are not
  - making sure that teaching is good in both year groups and all subjects.
- Build on the good work that has already been done to assess and track pupils' progress by:
  - working with other schools to see that the levels being given are always accurate
  - revising pupils' targets to become even more aspirational as teachers find out more about what pupils can do well
  - developing a system to assess and track pupils' progress in subjects other than English and

mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In Key Stage 4, students' progress is too patchy and students do not have clear enough targets to aim towards in each subject. Some Key Stage 4 students are making good progress in mathematics and science and working towards GCSE and other examinations.
- In Nursery and Reception, children make good and sometimes excellent progress. They quickly settle and learn the routines of the day. They learn how to communicate their needs and choices. They develop their speaking and listening skills, and learn how to use signs and symbols to support their communication. They make good progress with socialising and working with other children.
- When the school was placed into special measures, many pupils had not made enough progress after leaving Reception. Because teaching has improved a great deal, and much of it is now good, many pupils are now making good progress in their lessons and their skills and understanding are improving over time. During the inspection, pupils were making good progress in many of the lessons and parts of lessons observed.
- In Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, the majority of pupils are making good progress with their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Pupils who are ready to do so are developing their ability to recognise letters and the sounds that they make, and more able pupils are developing their reading fluency and comprehension well. Pupils' knowledge and application of mathematics is improving quickly.
- Many pupils, particularly those on the autistic spectrum, have made strong progress with their communication skills over the last two terms. Parents and carers have noticed and commented favourably on these improvements. For example, several pupils who were not speaking at all are now speaking, signing and using symbols to communicate with adults. They are also interacting with each other far more. Older and more able pupils are developing their ability to give more sophisticated explanations and express opinions.
- Governors have approved the use of pupil premium funding to support the development of pupils' personal and social skills and to extend their experiences. This is improving pupils' confidence and their ability to concentrate and communicate, which in turn is helping their learning in the classroom. There is no difference in the academic progress being made by pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and their peers.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is improving strongly, particularly in English and mathematics, but there is still some variability in its quality. At times, staff do not challenge individual pupils who are not engaged in their learning quickly enough so that they take part in the lesson. Sometimes, they do not ask more able pupils to extend their answers or to think about the accuracy of what they have said. In some lessons the balance between the time pupils spend with an adult and working independently is not quite right.
- Teachers are receiving frequent training in the areas in which they are less confident and this is having a good impact on their skills.
- The vast majority of lessons have a suitable structure and level of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Staff give pupils plenty of encouragement but also correct their errors and misconceptions so that they are able to learn well. The best taught lessons have a high level of

challenge and teachers support pupils to try new experiences or to extend their thinking. Teaching assistants are confident, with a wide range of skills, and work well as part of the classroom teams.

- In English and mathematics teachers have carefully assessed pupils' skills and understanding and usually use this information well to plan their lessons. Teachers group pupils carefully to help them to learn. For example, during a lesson observed during the inspection, each group included a pupil with good reading and typing skills. This meant that all were able to be successful in learning about how to use a search engine effectively.
- Reading is now taught reasonably well. Pupils receive daily phonics (letters and the sounds they make) lessons in small groups. Staff's skills have grown considerably, however senior leaders are aware that there is still a need to improve the accuracy of how staff model sounds. The speech and language therapists provide good support to staff and the recent purchase of many new books pitched at the right age for the pupils is also making a positive difference.
- The new, creative approaches to teaching different subjects, which involve plenty of work off-site, are having an excellent impact on pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- The learning environment is good. Pupils' work is displayed in all parts of the school. The usefulness of these displays is enhanced by the use of symbols. Good use of signing and symbols contributes to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

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

- Pupils have responded very well to the new, positive atmosphere in the school. Their attitudes to learning are good and often excellent. Pupils are considerate to each other. Older pupils have a good awareness of the needs of the younger ones. Social times are pleasant, orderly events, in which many pupils organise themselves and enjoy each other's company.
- The youngest pupils and those with more complex needs make good progress in being able to take part in group activities. This is greatly assisted by the very good routines which start as soon as pupils come into school each morning. Through these, pupils know what to expect and are able to manage their own behaviour.
- Staff manage challenging behaviours well. This is assisted by clear behaviour plans. Much-improved analysis of the patterns of behaviour is allowing staff to think about why some behaviours may occur and how they may be prevented.
- Pupils' extremely strong involvement in the school has been an important factor in helping it to improve. From the outset, the headteacher was honest with pupils about the need for the school to get better and how they could help. Several Key Stage 4 students attended a 'visioning day' with staff, governors and parents, in which they played a full part in deciding what the school should be like in the future. Pupils from Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 attended a curriculum planning day with staff, where they contributed to planning topics for pupils throughout the school. They take a full part in appointing new staff.
- Teachers emphasise to pupils how to stay safe. Lessons include a focus on safe behaviour, such as using the internet carefully. The school has rightly decided to review the way personal, social and health education is taught to ensure that it has an appropriate focus on relationships at different points in pupils' education. Pupils know that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The majority of pupils attend very well but a few do not. Processes for managing poor

attendance have improved recently. The new attendance policy emphasises the need for all pupils' attendance to be high so that they can learn well.

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

- The headteacher's positive, determined and measured approach has had an excellent impact on improving the school. The two other senior leaders support her very well. Together, the senior leadership team have an accurate understanding of where the school's strengths and remaining weaknesses lie.
- Senior leaders combine assessment information, lesson observations, and analysis of pupils' work to make their judgements on the quality of teaching. This evidence all contributes to the headteacher's reviews of teachers' performance. The checks leaders make lead to well-targeted actions that improve the teaching and learning for all pupils and ensure they have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Staff have responded very well to the headteacher's expectation that their work is always of high quality. They take responsibility for developing their own teaching and leadership skills, and are starting to lead aspects of whole-school work. The new aspects of the curriculum are very effective and contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's assessment process is thorough. Staff assess the levels of pupils' work accurately. The school has a clear baseline from which it can measure improvement, although leaders know that targets will need to be adjusted as teachers find out more about what pupils know and can do. Suitably demanding targets have been set for all pupils in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 but need to be revised for students in Key Stage 4. The school is tracking pupils' progress well in English and mathematics but not yet as well across other subjects, including the enrichment courses.
- The local authority has provided the school with good, well-focused support. It has been responsive to the school's needs and has altered the amount and type of support provided as the school has improved. The local authority has provided good quality training for the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has developed exceptionally well under the leadership of the new Chair and is very strong. The Chair has spent a great deal of time in school, getting to know staff and pupils, and has systematically learnt about all aspects of her role. Other governors are equally dedicated. They have organised themselves very efficiently so that each governor has a clear responsibility for monitoring an aspect of the school's improvement, therefore holding the headteacher to account as well as offering support when needed. This has given them the knowledge to ask good questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, including the impact of how effectively pupil premium money is being used. They make sure that decisions about pay and promotion are linked to teachers' performance and pupils' improved rates of progress. They know how the school rewards good teaching and what it is doing to tackle any underperformance. Governors have also become well known to parents and carers and are always available to talk to them at both formal and informal school events.

## What inspection judgements mean

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>	113037
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	410369

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie Gerring
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2012
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