

# The Village School

Grove Park, Kingsbury, London NW9 0JY

**Inspection dates** 18–19 April 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 |                      | Outstanding  | 1        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good         | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- All pupils achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. Achievement in communication, reading and the creative arts is particularly good.
- Pupils' personal development, especially their behaviour and understanding of how to stay safe, is outstanding because the staff are very caring and supportive.
- The partnership with families is exceptionally strong, and parents and carers benefit greatly from the workshops and courses they are offered.
- The sixth form is good. Sixth-formers receive a good education and have good opportunities for adult and vocational experiences.
- Most teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils and provide activities that are well matched to pupils' levels of ability.
- The senior leaders and governors are committed to improving the school. Since the last inspection, they have brought about improvements in achievement and the quality of teaching through supportive feedback and good training programmes.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Classroom staff do not always collect accurate information during lessons about the progress each pupil is making, especially in their basic skills.
- A few teachers spend too long talking to the whole class instead of allowing the pupils to get on with tasks.
- Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise writing in every subject.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to work on their own and find things out for themselves.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons taught by 23 different teachers.
- All of the lessons were observed jointly with a member of the school’s senior leadership team.
- Inspectors heard pupils from different classes read in their lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, and parents and carers.
- The inspectors looked at assessment information, statements of special educational needs, attendance information, the school’s development plan, the school’s monitoring information, a wide range of policies including safeguarding, and governing body documentation.
- There were no responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. The inspectors examined 125 staff questionnaires, which were taken into account by inspectors, along with the school’s own surveys of pupils’ and parents’ and carers’ views.

## Inspection team

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Mick Megee, Lead Inspector | Additional inspector |
| Keith Tysoe                | Additional inspector |
| Richard Hill               | Additional inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Village School provides education for pupils who have moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties.
- Many of the pupils have additional difficulties such as medical needs or autism.
- All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- There are a very small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, with a wide range of ethnic groups represented in the school. The largest minority ethnic groups are Asian (Asian British, Pakistani or Indian) and Black African, which make up a third and a quarter of the pupils respectively. About two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Over half the pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families). No children from service families currently attend the school. This proportion is well above average.
- The school makes use of alternative provision off-site, with pupils and students accompanied by members of the school staff. Partnerships with further education colleges, namely Harrow, Barnet, North Brent and West Hertfordshire colleges, provide sixth-form students with additional learning opportunities. Pupils attend neighbouring primary and secondary schools in order to experience mainstream teaching and examination courses.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was housed in temporary accommodation on three sites while awaiting the completion of the building of a new school on the original site.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in all year groups by:
  - collecting accurate information during lessons about the progress each pupil is making in order to achieve their individual targets, especially in English and mathematics
  - making sure that teachers do not spend too much time talking to the whole class and that pupils are allowed to get on with tasks set for them
  - providing greater opportunities and better resources for all pupils to work on their own and find things out for themselves
  - making sure that all pupils have frequent opportunities to practise writing in all subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils, including students in the sixth form, make good progress from their different starting points. Parents and carers say that they are happy with the good progress that their children make at the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start because staff organise the classrooms very carefully so that children learn effectively through the day.
- The nature of the pupils' learning difficulties means that all pupils are working below the levels expected nationally when they enter the school.
- Pupils make very strong progress in developing their communication skills because staff give them many opportunities to practise these skills, often through sign, symbols, gestures and facial expressions, in every lesson and throughout the day. In this way, pupils become able to let staff and other pupils know their choices and opinions.
- The school's new approach to the teaching of reading, involving structured individual support, has helped pupils to make good progress in their ability to read. During the inspection, pupils read aloud with confidence in a number of lessons.
- Progress in writing is good, but not as strong as in other basic skills, because teachers do not always make enough demands on pupils to write in a range of subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is slower than that in English, though still good. Last year, the school identified gaps in pupils' understanding of shapes and measures. Extra time was given to teaching this area of the subject and a specialist teacher was appointed. The school's information shows that progress in mathematics is now catching up progress in English.
- Pupils achieve very well in creative subjects such as art, music and drama because of the expert teaching in those subjects.
- In the past three years, all pupils who have left the school from the sixth form have gone on to further education, training or employment, having achieved meaningful qualifications.
- Pupils achieve well no matter what their background or circumstances. There is no difference between the overall progress of any groups of pupils, such as girls or boys, any ethnic minority groups, pupils with complex or severe learning difficulties and pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority, make the same good progress in English and mathematics, and reach similar levels of attainment in these subjects as other pupils.
- The pupil premium funding goes towards the provision of residential experiences, language and reading support, and the employment of a family support worker.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Parents and carers agree strongly that their children are well taught and say that they are particularly pleased by the teachers' cheerfulness, approachability and willingness to help the families both in and out of school.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and teach with enthusiasm, particularly in communication and reading.
- Relationships with pupils are very strong and most teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils, providing activities that are well matched to pupils' levels of ability. A typical comment from a pupil was: 'All the teachers here are great; they take time to explain to us what we have to do and help us when we get stuck.'
- Most teachers use a good variety of approaches and methods, including new technology such as interactive whiteboards and laptops, to keep pupils' interest and enable them to be fully involved in the activities planned for them.
- All the classroom staff, including teaching assistants and volunteers, work well together and provide good support, for example by working closely with individual pupils.
- Teachers generally provide a good pace of learning, but in a few lessons, teachers talk for too

long and pupils do not spend as much time as they could getting on with tasks.

- When teachers are talking to the whole class, some pupils spend too much time waiting with nothing to do. Sometimes, pupils are not challenged as much as they could be because teachers do not always plan for pupils to work on their own or find things out for themselves as much as they could do.
- The school has a good system in place for analysing information on pupils' progress. However, staff do not always gather enough information on pupils' progress, especially in basic skills, during lessons. This makes it more difficult for teachers to set precise, tailored targets for individual pupils.
- The school's own observations correctly show the quality of teaching ranges from requiring improvement to outstanding.

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

- Pupils are very polite and welcoming, and they often show delight through broad smiles when approached or spoken to when visitors enter their classroom.
- Staff at all times display sensitivity and kindness to the pupils, taking care of their personal needs skilfully and without fuss.
- The very strong relationships between everyone reflect the school's warm, caring and happy atmosphere. This gives pupils the self-confidence and resilience to have a go when presented with a difficult task, such as sounding out loud the syllables of a word they have not read before.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying, and parents and carers and the school's records agree with this view. Pupils all say that they feel safe and like coming to school, and parents and carers good-humouredly complain that their children are so keen to get on the school bus in the morning, they often forget to say goodbye to them.
- Behaviour is exemplary almost all of the time, and as one pupil, speaking for others, put it, 'There's no chaos, no tantrums and definitely no fighting!' In lessons, pupils are eager learners, throwing themselves into activities, and remaining tolerant and polite if they have to wait their turn.
- Students in the sixth form learn to keep themselves and others safe at all times, and speak affectionately about the younger pupils in the school. A typical response from a student was: 'Seeing the young ones happy - that does it for me. If they're happy, that puts a smile on my face.'
- As they grow up, the school assists the pupils exceptionally well to develop their understanding of how to express their needs and wishes, make sensible choices and to stay safe, especially when socialising, either on the computer or when they are involved in leisure activities.
- Attendance is just above average. A small number of pupils are unable to attend consistently well because of severe ill-health issues, some of which are life-limiting.

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

- The school's leadership team and governing body are effective, and resolved to continually improve the school and help the pupils achieve outstanding outcomes. Surveys of parents, carers, pupils and staff show that the vast majority of stakeholders have full confidence in the leadership team and governing body.
- Despite the disruption of temporary relocation and an imminent move to new accommodation, the school has remained firmly focused on improving the education offered and has addressed all the issues from the last inspection. The senior leaders continue to expect the best through ambitious planning and careful reviewing.
- The local authority provides a suitable level of support, especially through the provision of an experienced school improvement officer, who has a keen awareness of the needs of the school.
- The senior leaders provide good leadership to teachers by accurate and thorough checking of

the quality of their teaching, and by giving them supportive feedback. This has resulted in much improved teaching over the last two years.

- There is a secure link between teachers' performance and pay awards. Staff, including newly qualified teachers, praise the range and depth of professional development activities that they are offered.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are good. The school makes increasingly effective use of the nationally published information showing the progress of pupils with a similar starting point, comparing it with the progress of pupils in the school.
- Inequality and discrimination are not tolerated, as can be seen from the robust action taken by the school to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve equally well.
- The senior leaders have taken effective steps to make sure that leadership responsibilities are spread through the staff. Subject leaders, for example, bring about a consistent approach to the teaching and improved outcomes in English and mathematics.
- The school is absolutely committed to securing and maintaining strong partnerships, especially with parents and carers, in order to improve pupils' life chances. Through detailed consultations, the school knows what parents and carers need and how they wish to be supported. The school offers parents and carers a very wide range of workshops and courses which are always extremely well attended.
- The school engages in a wide range of external relationships, often leading the developments at a strategic level, for example through the local safeguarding board. There are strong links with local mainstream and special schools and colleges. The schools provide good opportunities for pupils to attend and succeed in mainstream lessons away from the school site.
- Students in the sixth form spend an increasing amount of time developing and applying their skills in adult situations. Those who require further adult or vocational experiences attend programmes at local colleges. The school regularly checks up on the quality of education that the pupils receive in these external placements.
- Leaders make sure that the school provides good value for money, particularly in its use of additional funds such as the pupil premium. This money is used to make a positive difference by providing additional resources and opportunities for eligible pupils. For example, the funds pay for a family support worker who fosters and maintains strong links with the pupils' parents and carers so that they can effectively support their children's learning at home.
- The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs and interests of learners. Art, music and drama are particularly strong. Leaders ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very well established across the curriculum, including a number of learning experiences out in the community.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body of the school makes a good contribution to leading the school by asking probing questions of pupils, parents and carers, and staff. In this way, it has developed a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement. The governors have established good procedures that have enabled them to challenge senior leaders where this is necessary. The governors robustly monitor the school development plan and make sure that all statutory requirements, such as safeguarding, are met. The governors have rapidly improved the finances available to the school through prudent management so that the school now has the resources necessary to drive its priorities forward. They are clear about how the pupil premium is being spent and can identify the positive effect this is having on eligible pupils. Governors have received training so that they can judge how well teachers are performing and oversee the link between the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and teachers' pay.

## 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 pupil's 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 pupil's 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> | 101583 |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Brent  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 404771 |

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 special         |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 4–19                      |
| <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>    | 212                       |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 45                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body        |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Ian Wybrew-Bond           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | Kay Johnson               |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 30 March 2011             |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 020 8204 5396             |
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