

Woodlands School

Bransgrove Road, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 6JP

Inspection dates 6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Their progress is supported by well-designed personal learning plans and rigorous target-setting. They make excellent progress in developing their communication and learning skills.
- Teaching is outstanding because expectations of pupils are consistently high and assessment of progress is very thorough. Staff use assessment information very effectively to plan the next steps in learning.
- Staff form highly effective teams and sustain a clear focus on reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Adults generate high levels of engagement from pupils, using well-judged strategies that address individual needs.
- Pupils enjoy being in school. They feel safe, and their parents and carers agree that their children are very well looked after.
- Pupils form strong relationships with the adults that teach and support them. Highly effective behaviour management enables pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour, supported by very clear structures and routines.
- The school's leaders and the governing body have a very clear vision for the school that is shared by all the staff. They have a deep and accurate understanding of the school's performance.
- The school's leadership inspires and enables the staff to develop their own practice and to be consistently ambitious for the pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons, visiting all classes, some of them more than once. All of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with a group of pupils, senior staff, subject leaders, the parent ambassador and representatives from the governing body and local authority.
- They analysed a sample of pupils' achievement files, which included work samples, assessments and annual reviews.
- Inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation summary, data showing pupils' attainment, and progress and attendance data. They looked at and discussed development plans with members of staff with leadership and management responsibilities.
- Inspectors also took account of 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), four written communications from parents and carers, and 50 questionnaires from school staff.

Inspection team

Barnard Payne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a primary special school for children aged 3–11 with severe and complex learning difficulties; 77% have severe learning difficulties and 23% have profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- All pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils have significant secondary special educational needs, including over 45% who are on the autistic spectrum.
- Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is based in two mixed Nursery/Reception classes and one mixed Reception/Year 1 class.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through additional pupil premium funding is above the national average. This is additional government funding provided for pupils eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups and over half of the school population are of Asian or Asian British heritage; over 65% of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school has achieved the Investors In People Silver Award, the Healthy Schools Award, National Autistic Society accreditation and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that those parts of lessons involving the whole class consistently engage all pupils by:
 - giving teaching assistants more of a key role in whole-class activities
 - devising strategies to enable all pupils to contribute.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress, and the school uses its rigorous assessments and analysis of information on pupils' achievement to set work at appropriate levels for all groups. The school's assessment data show that most pupils exceed expected rates of progress given their starting points.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support through additional pupil premium funding make the same excellent progress as other pupils and achieve at a similar level in English and mathematics. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make excellent progress and are fully supported by the school's emphasis on communication, language and literacy skills, which enables them to develop their use of language using a variety of means.
- Pupils' achievement is based on very clear expectations and structures that are set from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. In a lesson with the youngest children, the teacher used songs to enable pupils to make choices and use signing and symbols. Pupils loved the repetition in the songs and staff made the activity both purposeful and fun. In another lesson, Nursery and Reception children developed their confidence in communicating, speaking and listening when learning about loud/soft and fast/slow, and making sounds with percussion instruments.
- Lesson observations, and samples of pupils' work and assessments over time show that staff move pupils on quickly; for example, while most pupils are not yet able to read books in a conventional way, there are many opportunities for them to share stories and, wherever possible, pupils are strongly encouraged to read books themselves.
- In a lesson in Key Stage 2, a class story was used by the teacher to focus on a range of communication skills that took account of the full range of ability in the class. She created many opportunities to challenge pupils as they found pictures that matched objects in the story; there were excellent opportunities for pupils to communicate verbally, through signing and through taking part. As a result, pupils made very rapid progress.
- In another Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher used the class story as a means of instilling learning skills. This approach was very successful in getting pupils to use the structures, schedules and routines to learn effectively.
- Continual tracking and assessments of pupils with the most complex needs accurately record small steps in progress and are used to identify the next steps. In one lesson, the teacher focused precisely on pupils' personal targets in a highly interactive session where they greeted one another.
- The more-able pupils are set personal challenges, for example to work with increasing independence. In one lesson, a more-able pupil was prompted to speak in full sentences, in line with one of his personal literacy targets, and did so. His mathematics book shows that he can, independently, sequence days of the week and was then challenged to match each day to activities, which he also achieved independently.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- There is a high level of consistency in teaching across the school. Much of the teaching is outstanding and it is always at least good.
- Staff share the same high expectations and use assessment extremely effectively to plan lessons. There is a strong emphasis on enabling pupils to learn by establishing routines and schedules in which they can work effectively and also a sharp focus on developing pupils' abilities to communicate and interact.
- In a mixed Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 class, the teacher used snack-time as a way of developing communication skills, setting very clear expectations; a great deal of well-targeted interaction, with choosing, use of personal schedules and use of the picture exchange communication system, contributed to outstanding achievement.

- Teachers and other adults skilfully engage pupils in activities, making very precise judgements about the best strategies for each pupil. Occasionally, when pupils work as a whole class, they are not all equally engaged and some adopt a passive role; teaching assistants play less of a role on these occasions.
- Work is rigorously assessed and teaching assistants play a key role in this process. A highly effective marking and recording system tracks progress and identifies the level of support a pupil received, what is good about the work and how it could be improved.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Parents and carers, and staff, strongly agree that pupils are well looked after and feel safe. They are happy and secure in school. Teachers and support staff work very effectively with therapists to look after pupils' physical and emotional needs.
- Behaviour is consistently well managed, with effective strategies established to enable pupils to learn how to manage their own behaviour. These include high expectations regarding pupils developing their abilities to communicate needs and requests, and very effective ways of helping pupils modify their behaviour over time in order to aid their learning.
- The school's emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills means that their abilities to make choices and communicate needs form a key part of their personal and social development. In a meeting with a small group, pupils told the inspector that they feel listened to and will go to an adult if they have any problems. They learn about how to keep healthy and safe, including learning about how to stay safe when using the internet.
- There is a very strong consensus among parents and carers, staff and pupils that bullying is dealt with effectively. There is no evidence of any bullying in the school.
- Pupils' attendance is a little better than other special schools and the school follows up any absences diligently. The school's context means that some pupils suffer from ill health, leading to some longer-term absences.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school's leadership is inspirational and has ensured continual improvements in the school's practice. The school's leaders set very clear targets for staff, providing excellent training opportunities and modelling an outstanding level of professional standards. As a result, the staff are inspired to be ambitious both in terms of developing their own practice and in setting high expectations of the pupils.
- The school is rigorous in its monitoring of teaching, learning and achievement. The development of assessment practice and the tracking of pupils' progress are exceptional and have had a direct impact on improving achievement and the quality of teaching. Since the school's previous inspection, achievement, teaching and the use of assessment have all improved.
- The school makes outstanding use of external support and partnerships, including making well-targeted use of the local authority's resources.
- The school makes excellent use of its staff appraisal system. Each year, there is a little staff turnover and it is a testament to the impact of appraisal and staff development that teaching is of such consistent quality. The school has an outstanding track record of bringing classroom practice up to the expected standard.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with a wide variety of experiences but is firmly based upon the acquisition of communication, literacy and numeracy skills. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly embedded in classroom practice: class activities consistently revolve around setting clear values and expectations, sharing experiences, developing awareness of others, building relationships and responding to new experiences.
- The school is entirely focused on ensuring equality of opportunity. Many pupils have very

complex learning needs and the school's use of personal learning plans ensures that all pupils have clear targets and that their progress is relentlessly tracked, with teachers held accountable for the outcomes.

- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers, and the parent ambassador has had a considerable impact on drawing parents and carers together and providing support, in particular for those groups of parents and carers that are harder to reach.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely well informed and keeps all aspects of the school's performance under review. Governors have a very secure understanding of the quality of teaching and of pupils' performance data. The governing body has ensured that the school has robust performance management systems that involve reviewing staff pay and aligning this with performance. Governors thoroughly track the progress of pupils known to be eligible for support through additional pupil premium funding and hold the school to account to achieve value for money. There is an excellent approach to providing training for governors, provided both in-house and externally, so that both newer and more-experienced governors can carry out their roles effectively.

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

Unique reference number	133316
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	403823

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anmarie Taylor-Kent
Headteacher	John Feltham
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 December 2009
Telephone number	020 8381 2188
Fax number	020 8731 2360
Email address	office@woodlands.harrow.sch.uk

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