

# Welcombe Hills School

Blue Cap Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6TQ

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in communicating their needs and expressing choices.
- Pupils develop good life skills.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good because these are taught well.
- Pupils' artwork is stunningly creative.
- Pupils perform in musical concerts with mainstream peers.
- Children achieve well in the Nursery. Some move to mainstream schools.
- The sixth form is good. Students gain the qualifications required to join suitable college courses when they leave school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe is outstanding.
- Staff manage pupils with autistic spectrum disorders exceptionally well.
- Therapists remove barriers for pupils. Modifications to wheelchairs and imaginative adaptations to cutlery enable pupils to move and feed with increased independence.
- Senior leaders, including governors, check the quality of teaching rigorously and provide extensive training for teachers. This enables teachers to teach more effectively, thus raising pupils' achievement and supporting school improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teaching assistants 'dive in' too quickly to help pupils and so reduce their independence in learning.
- A few teachers take too long explaining to pupils what they need to do. This slows their learning.
- In a few lessons teachers make insufficient use of their knowledge of what pupils already know and can do to plan new work for them at the correct level of challenge.
- A few teaching assistants lack confidence in challenging pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons taught by 19 different teachers. Thirteen of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from different disability and special educational needs groups. They looked at their work when observing lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils (supported by staff), governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including statements of special educational needs, transition plans, feeding plans, intimate care plans, pupils' progress data, attendance data, the restraints log, the school's improvement plan, monitoring of teaching information, the appraisal policy, all safeguarding documents and the minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors examined 48 questionnaires completed by staff.
- There were 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. These views were taken into account by inspectors along with the school's own most recent parent survey and letters sent into the school by parents marked for the attention of the inspection team. The lead inspector also spoke with a few parents over the telephone (at their specific request to do so).

## Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school makes provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Over a third of the pupils on roll also have autistic spectrum disorders. Other additional needs include physical disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, speech language and communication needs, specific learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and complex medical conditions.
- There is an assessment Nursery on site (that means children are referred by the Children's Development Service via health visitors or doctors to be assessed). These children do not have statements of special educational needs. Those who make sufficient progress go on to continue their Early Years Foundation Stage provision in mainstream schools. The others are formally stated. They then either continue their education in this school or go to another special school closer to where they live.
- All pupils from Reception through to and including the sixth form have statements of special educational needs.
- This school is 'A Specialist College for Visual and Performing Arts'.
- The school makes use of alternative provision. Work-related subjects such as construction and motor mechanics, child care, performing arts and a business enterprise project are all delivered through Stratford College.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those from families who speak English as an additional language, are below average. These pupils are represented across all of the different disability and special educational needs groups in the school.
- A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, which is extra government funding for children looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in all subjects by making sure that:
  - teaching assistants do not 'dive in' too quickly and give pupils immediate answers (such as how to spell a particular word), but give pupils sufficient space and time to work out answers and solve problems independently
  - teachers do not spend too much time explaining to pupils what they are expected to do and learn, particularly when they move from whole-class teaching to focused group work so as to sustain a brisk pace to pupils' learning
  - all teachers make effective use of what pupils already know and can do to plan work at the correct level of challenge to move them on more rapidly with new learning.
- Improve the leadership and management of the provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties by:
  - training teaching assistants who work with these pupils so that they become confident to change what they do on the spot (when they observe a pupil showing signs of moving towards a new development such as grasping an object with his/her hands or moving his/her head towards the left stop what they may have been doing and run with what the pupil is attempting to do instead) so as to enable pupils to realise their full potential
  - training all staff who work with these pupils so that they are aware of the importance of building in challenges to stretch these pupils at all times (so if a pupil demonstrates that her feet belong to her body give that pupil an opportunity to use her feet to operate a switch to

- make an independent choice or if a pupil reaches out and successfully touches an object move it a little further away to encourage the pupil to reach out that bit further)
- ensuring staff always position pupils carefully and rub their fingers and massage their hands to maximise their chance of participating in activities.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Typically, on entry to the Nursery children are frustrated because they cannot communicate their needs. Some are distressed further because they struggle to move freely. Speedily, they make good progress in communication and movement because of the quality support they receive.
- Measured from their various starting points, students in the sixth form make good progress in English and mathematics. All gain an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network qualification in 'Personal Progress' at an appropriate level for them. This enables them to go to college or secure a community placement when they leave school.
- Pupils develop good life and work-related skills. By the end of Year 11, a few pupils have been so successful on their vocational courses at college and work-experience placements that they go straight into paid employment.
- Pupils make outstanding progress towards their personal targets. They learn to travel on a bus independently; propel their wheelchairs with confidence around the school site; and gain self-advocacy skills.
- Achievement in art and the performing arts is outstanding, reflecting the creative flair of the teachers of these subjects and the opportunities pupils have to work collaboratively with mainstream peers from local schools.
- Pupils' communication skills are developed well across all subjects. Literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills are developed particularly well through their work-related courses. For example, pupils learn to weigh ingredients and cut a cake into equal portions in cookery. Before making the cake they write (in words or a pictorial format) shopping lists of what they will need to buy to make a cake.
- Throughout Key Stages 1 to 4 pupils, whatever their disability or special educational needs, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Positioned comfortably so that they can see, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties eye gaze with amazement at puppets (related to the story) during sensory story time. Those pupils with autistic spectrum disorders read their picture cards to make choices. The most-able pupils with severe learning difficulties read books, sounding out with a reasonable degree of accuracy any unfamiliar words they encounter. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties use a simple dictionary to find out the meanings of those words.
- Writing for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is a challenge. Nonetheless, with sleeves rolled up and hand-over-hand support (from their teacher) they experience making marks in 'gloop' (messy substances). Most pupils with severe learning difficulties write simple sentences using computer-assisted symbol programs. The most-able pupils with severe learning difficulties write newspaper reports using a few interesting verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Their spellings and use of simple punctuation are reasonably accurate. Those with moderate learning difficulties structure up to three paragraphs independently.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties explore one object and then one more. They listen to number rhymes and to their teacher counting out loud the number of bounces they experience on the trampoline (rebound therapy). Those with severe learning difficulties

learn to tell the time and begin to understand simple fractions. The most-able (those with moderate learning difficulties) solve mathematical problems by splitting large numbers into smaller units so that they are easier to work with (partitioning number skills).

- Careful positioning and use of specialist equipment enable pupils with sight and/or hearing impairment to achieve as well as their peers. When a few pupils with complex medical conditions begin to slip backwards, they receive intensive physiotherapy to help them improve their physical responses so as to increase their rate of progress again.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to fund targeted small-group support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Consequently, they achieve as well as their peers in English and mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, receive focused support in accordance with their needs. They make the same good progress as other pupils.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers are effective in developing pupils' communication skills. Flexible use of a range of imaginative techniques and quality resources enable pupils in all disability groups to answer challenging questions. Thus in a class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties one pupil answered 'yes' by eye pointing; another used a picture to answer a question about which game she wanted to play; and yet another made a good attempt to sign a response.
- Activities are creatively planned to develop pupils' life skills. As pupils with severe learning difficulties shop, selecting groceries from the shelves at a supermarket, using their pre-prepared shopping lists, queue at the till to pay the cashier they apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a relevant context and gain in confidence.
- Typically, teachers have high expectations and combine their subject and special education expertise to successfully accelerate pupils' learning. For example, at the start of lessons they calm pupils with autistic spectrum disorders by applying physical sensations tailored to each pupil in the class (gentle rocking for one; wrapping in a blanket for another; and giving yet another the space to make large movements with the arms as if using a paintbrush to make a paint stroke on a large canvas). Ready to learn these pupils then make good progress in their lessons.
- Inspirational teaching was observed in a number of subjects. For example, in an outstanding art lesson each student had a specific planned learning outcome based on the teacher's knowledge of their prior learning. Planned activities enabled each pupil to make outstanding progress and so achieve their challenging learning outcomes. Teaching assistants made a valuable contribution to pupils learning in this lesson. This is so in most lessons.
- In a few lessons teachers take too long explaining to pupils what they need to learn. This slows their learning. Very occasionally, teachers make insufficient use of what they know about what pupils need to learn to plan work at the correct level to challenge them. This holds them back. On rare occasions teaching assistants jump in too quickly and 'spoon feed' pupils. For example, in an English lesson when a pupil said, 'How do I spell curious?' the teaching assistant gave the pupil the spelling rather than encouraging him to try and work it out for himself.
- Occasionally, teaching assistants working with pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties do not have the confidence to change what they are doing on the spot to move pupils

on with new developments quickly enough. For example, in one such lesson a pupil reached out and touched an object, but the teaching assistant did not then move it a little further away to challenge him to try to reach out further. Another came close to grasping a shell. But the teaching assistant did not massage his hand to enhance his chance of doing so successfully.

- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the sixth form.

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

- Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Because teachers are highly skilled at removing obstacles that interfere with their learning pupils engage with the interesting and challenging activities the school provides.
- Staff position pupils comfortably, so that they have maximum freedom of movement, to use the equipment they need to learn. They get them out of their wheelchairs and standing frames as far as is possible. Creative adaptations to furniture and equipment enable pupils to access and enjoy the same experiences as their mainstream peers.
- Teachers sit pupils with autistic spectrum disorders away from resources or areas in the classroom that are likely to distract them. When these pupils wander off task, teachers quickly re-engage them with learning. They can be seen singing softly to them as they gently coach them back to their learning tasks.
- Behaviour is good. Recorded instances of racism and bullying associated with pupils' particular difficulties are exceptionally rare. When they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and there is a positive outcome.
- This is a calm school where pupils relate well with each other and staff. In corridors they greet staff and visitors, often with a wonderful sense of humour.
- Pupils who speak using words (the majority in this school) say that they feel very safe at school. They say 'We can talk about anything that troubles us with a trusted adult'. Those with intimate care needs feel well supported and as a few articulate sixth form students said, 'We are treated with dignity'.
- Pupils (within capability) have an outstanding knowledge of cyber bullying and prejudice-based types of bullying. They are adept at assessing risks and keeping safe. They know that they must wear a helmet when riding a 'bike'; keep their fingers away from the blade when using a saw; and carry a garden fork with the sharp end pointed towards the ground.
- They know that they must never get into a car with a stranger. Students in the sixth form have an outstanding understanding of the potential harmful effects of unsafe sex and the risks associated with smoking.
- Attendance for most pupils is high. Absence is linked mostly to lengthy stays in hospital or frequent visits to off-site specialist medical clinics.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Since the previous inspection the headteacher, supported by the other members of the senior leadership team, has been relentless and effective in her drive to improve teaching. The amount of good and outstanding teaching has increased significantly over the last three years.
- Targeted training is provided to develop teachers. Mostly they respond well and so improve their practice. For example, a recent focused set of lesson observations and scrutiny of work showed some inconsistency in the feedback pupils received about their written work. Focused coaching was put in place to ensure improvement and consistency. Pupils now get better and consistent feedback. The quality of their writing has improved as a result.
- The school analyses its work diligently and rigorously. It has an accurate picture of what it does well and what needs further improvement. It uses its analysis to improve.
- Leadership and management of therapies, specialist programmes, subjects and key stages are good. However, the leadership and management of the provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties lags slightly behind that of other disability groups in the school. Teaching assistants have not had sufficient training in the techniques required to challenge these pupils rigorously.
- Leaders provide opportunities for pupils from mainstream schools to use its specialist music and drama facilities. They ensure that disability is not a barrier to the pupils in the school performing with mainstream schools in musical and drama productions. Thus the school meets what is required of it as a specialist status school.
- Work with parents is good and benefits pupils. Parents are provided with symbol cards to support bedtime routines for their children and practical tips on how to promote their children's independence. They say, 'This is a brilliant school'.
- All pupils have equal chances to succeed and leaders tackle any discrimination rigorously. There is no noticeable difference in the rate of progress between the different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' learning is significantly enhanced by residential trips, visits to museums, exciting after-school clubs and participation in musical concerts. This complements a wide range of subjects, enterprise opportunities, learning outdoors and opportunities to participate in sport (including non-ambulant pupils who take delight in showing off how they dance in their wheelchairs).
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils reflect on children who are very poor and initiate activities to raise funds to support them. Celebration of Islamic and Sikh festivals, visits to a mosque and a gurdwara and learning to speak French promote pupils awareness of cultural diversity.
- The local authority provides good support to the school through training governors and providing advice about assessment procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body challenges and supports senior leaders effectively. It is well informed about pupils' academic and personal progress and does not shy away from asking the headteacher 'hard' questions. It targets pupil-premium funding to raise the achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals. Involved in the school's analysis and planning cycle governors have a clear picture of the strengths and areas in need of improvement in the



school. Although highly skilled, governors keep abreast of training as provided by the local authority. They make sure that a robust policy links teachers' performance to pay, based on how effectively teachers promote pupils' learning. They know about any teaching concerns and support the headteacher in tackling them. The headteacher's performance is reviewed in accordance with regulations. The school's budget is monitored regularly by the finance sub-group of governors so there is no risk of it spiralling out of control. All safeguarding requirements are met.

## 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>	132202
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402548

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>	Special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<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>	168
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	24
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Grubb
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judith Humphry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01789 266845
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