

# The Sutton School and Specialist College

Scotts Green Close, Russells Hall Estate, Dudley, DY1 2DU

**Inspection dates** 24–25 September 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Sutton School and Specialist College is a good school and has made significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Teaching is now consistently good which enables students to make good progress.
- Teaching has many strengths. Marking is informative and students know what the next steps are to improve their learning.
- The school tracks progress carefully and uses this information to inform planning and improve students' learning.
- Parents report that students enjoy attending the school and that behaviour and safety has improved. Behaviour and safety are good.
- The headteacher has worked well with the leadership team and governing body to improve the quality of teaching and the range of qualifications offered to students since the last inspection.
- Students have a good understanding of safety and appropriate conduct. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning in lessons.
- Students appreciate the widening range of qualifications and study options. They enjoy lessons in art, music and preparing for work.
- Students particularly enjoy being part of the school brass band and taking part in trips abroad with the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable students to make excellent progress.
- The school does not always enter students for higher-level qualifications which would enable them to demonstrate typical or better progress in English and mathematics.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop independent and investigative study skills.
- Not all students are aware of the next steps they need to take to improve their reading skills.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed twenty one lessons. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with governors, senior and subject leaders, students and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors checked a range of documents including governors’ minutes, school self-evaluation, progress records, information relating to the safeguarding of students, and responses to the staff survey.
- The inspectors checked the work in students’ books and listened to some students reading.
- The views of parents were gathered through parent view and school surveys. There were 11 responses to Parent View and 13 responses to the staff survey.
- At the time of the inspection 21 pupils from the partner trust school were being educated in lessons on this site alongside Sutton students.

## Inspection team

Rosemary Mackenzie, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Phipps	Additional Inspector
Peter Lawley	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Sutton School and Specialist College educates students with moderate learning difficulties and a few have severe learning difficulties. Some students also have additional needs, such as autism or speech and language difficulties.
- The school is now part of a trust with a neighbouring special school, Halesbury. There are two governing bodies which report to the trust board. The headteacher of this school is also the executive headteacher of the partner trust school.
- The proportion of students entitled to the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for students looked after by the local authority or entitled to free school meals.
- More than three quarters of the students are boys. All students have a statement of educational need and most pupils are White British.
- The local further education college uses some of the school's facilities for post-16 provision for students with additional needs. This does not include the school's students and the college's provision does not form part of this inspection.
- Students from the partner trust school are educated on this site to enable them to follow accredited studies.
- Some students access work-related learning activities, such as health and beauty, at the partner trust school.
- A few students study for examinations at the local mainstream secondary school, Holly Hall Academy.

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

- Raise standards further, especially in mathematics and English by:
  - increasing the proportion of outstanding lessons
  - ensuring that students are entered for higher-level examinations which demonstrate progress that is typical or better
  - giving students more opportunities for independent learning, investigations, research and problem solving
  - ensuring that students are aware of the next steps they need to take in improving their reading.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make good progress from their starting points as there has been a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching in lessons.
- The school tracks students' progress carefully and frequently. If individuals are not making expected progress then early interventions are agreed and reviewed by the subject faculty leader with class teachers. The school analyses progress by groups and this demonstrates that all students achieve equally well.
- There is an impressive and increasing range of qualifications available for students. Students leave school with a broad range of qualifications. Senior leaders are highly committed to meeting individual study requests. However, students are not always entered for higher-level examinations which would enable them to demonstrate that they can make typical progress in English and mathematics.
- The progress of students over time continues to improve. This is due to raised expectations, careful tracking and improvements in teaching.
- The extra funding from pupil premium has been used effectively to meet the needs of targeted students, including the most able. They make progress at the same rate as the other students. Targeted support includes lunchtime study groups and additional resources to increase the range of accredited study.
- Most students enjoy lessons particularly in art and music. In an art lesson, for example, students were proud of their drawings and were able to explain the techniques they had used to improve their work.
- Students engage well in lessons and this supports their good achievement. However, there are not enough opportunities in lessons for them to work collaboratively, problem solve and develop independent learning skills.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The school has a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers have high expectations for students' conduct and learning, and they respond well to these. Lessons are purposeful, run at a good pace and students are well engaged in their learning. In one lesson students were challenged to understand sub-plots and had choices of how to record their findings. As a result, they responded well and made good progress through their investigations.
- Particular strengths of teaching include how the information from assessment is used to plan learning. Students are usually clear on the next steps they need to take in their learning and what they have learned in each lesson. However, students' reading records do not demonstrate this consistent approach and they were not as clear about the next steps they needed to take to improve their reading skills.
- At the end of lessons teachers use questioning well to check what students have learned and extend their thinking. For example, a quiz at the end of the art lesson was used particularly

effectively to extend students' critical thinking.

- In the vast majority of lessons disruptions to learning are minimised as staff generally manage students' behaviour well. Staff help students to develop positive attitudes to learning through praise and encouragement. Teaching assistants effectively support students and help them to concentrate and apply themselves to learning.
- In the most effective practice, students have choices, work in partnership, have opportunities to develop their independent and collaborative study skills, and solve problems. This is not consistent and such opportunities for these skills to be developed are sometimes overlooked.

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

- Students arrive and leave school in a safe, orderly and calm manner. Their conduct around school and in lessons is good. They are keen to learn and enjoy activities outside lessons.
- At lunchtimes behaviour is orderly, although opportunities for more social and communication learning are missed. Students say they would like a winter outdoor play area.
- Attendance is average and there are no recent permanent exclusions. The school works effectively with other agencies to ensure that students attend well.
- The parent and carer survey shows that the prevention of bullying has improved and that staff are caring and approachable. School records confirm that there has been a marked decrease in incidents.
- A very large majority of parents and carers responding to the online survey reported that their child felt safe in school. Students report that they feel safe on the whole. They say that most adults listen and take action if there is a problem.
- Students have a good understanding of internet safety and the reasoning behind the school's mobile phone policy.
- Usually staff manage behaviour well in lessons. This is due to good relationships, clear rewards and the appropriate pace of lessons. In a small minority of lessons where this is not the case, the use of language to manage conduct is less positive and this impacts on other students' learning and well-being. Students say they would like to see some inappropriate behaviour in lessons dealt with more effectively.

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

- The leadership team and governors have a clear vision for the trust's development. The headteacher has worked effectively to bring the two schools together, promote the sharing of resources and to improve the opportunities for students across the two schools. The links with other schools and colleges are of benefit to students and staff.
- The key issues from the last inspection have mainly been addressed, especially in that teaching has improved and students make good progress in lessons. The better use of assessment to guide teaching and learning has been a major contribution to this development.

- Subject leaders are effectively involved in raising standards through lesson observations and discussions about individual students' learning.
- Targets set for teachers have helped secure good teaching across the school. Staff have appreciated the opportunities to improve their practice further. There is an appropriate link between pay and the quality of teaching in the school.
- The pupil premium has been spent appropriately and has improved learning while providing additional social and subject learning opportunities. The range of accredited courses has been widened. Preparation for work is achieved through accredited courses, working with a careers advisor on mock interviews and work placement weeks.
- A very large majority of those who responded to the inspection surveys report that the school is well led and managed.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support. It has worked with the school to develop the trust.
- The school has secure procedures to ensure that students are protected and safe. Appropriate checks are in place on adults from other schools and colleges who may have contact with the school's students or have access to the premises. The school works effectively with other services to address any safeguarding concerns.
- The school offers an impressive range of accredited learning which continues to develop. Students from both schools are following accredited courses on the Sutton site. The curriculum offers opportunities in sport, the arts and music that are appreciated by the students. Qualified coaches teach sport and the school recently won the local special schools' league cup.
- The spiritual, moral and social development of the students is secure but opportunities for learning about other local faiths and cultures are not fully utilised. There is a strong emphasis on morals and conduct through assemblies. Students are looking forward to going to Crete and being in the school's brass band, both of which are examples of its wider provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors contribute well to the effective leadership and management of the school. Governors understand the school and provide challenge, for example they requested that the school provide more examination courses. They have been closely involved in the setting up of the trust and are appropriately involved in pay decisions for teachers. Governors have worked with the headteacher to ensure that the quality of teaching is good across the school. They know about pupil premium and how it is benefiting students. Governors are fully informed of the school's data analysis and progress for individuals. They have received appropriate training for safeguarding and are very well informed about the school's procedures.

## 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>	103877
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	427059

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>	Foundation special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	159
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Freeda Sunter
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Bishop-Rowe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818670
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