

# Bradfields School

Churchill Avenue, Chatham, Kent, ME5 0LB

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
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.

- Students make outstanding progress over time, particularly in English and mathematics. There has also been a year-on-year improvement of the proportion of students achieving GCSE passes, as well as successes in other accredited courses such as BTEC.
- Children attending the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2012 to 2013 made outstanding progress. This prepared them for learning and enabled them to move on successfully to the next stage of their education.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Many students continue their seamless progression throughout the school, others move directly to other further education provision, and some now join the school from other mainstream settings. All are prepared very well for the next stage of their lives beyond school.
- Students benefit from teaching which is mostly good and sometimes outstanding. However, a small amount of teaching requires improvement.
- Students' behaviour is good. This is as a result of the highly effective care and support that staff provide. In lessons, students were highly motivated and wanted to do their best.
- Students say they feel safe and happy at the school, as well as at the off-site provision they attend weekly. This is confirmed by their parents and the school's own records.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and his senior leadership team have a strong focus on continuing improvement of all aspects of the school's work.
- The governing body is highly supportive of the school, knows it very well and supports on-going improvements in all aspects of the school's work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking does not always provide students with a clear understanding of the next steps needed to improve their learning.
- Sometimes the work is not hard enough for all students in some classes.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons taught by 24 different teachers. Four of the lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with small groups of Year 6, Year 11 and a group of Year 12 and Year 13 students. An inspector also listened to a small group of Years 11 and 12 students reading. Meetings were also held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, others with posts of responsibility, the Chair of the Governing Body, who also discussed safeguarding responsibilities, and with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector took account of 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own recent parental questionnaire, and 40 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's checks on how well it is doing and improvement planning, information on pupils' progress, documents used by senior leaders to check the school's work, governing body documentation, as well as records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Evatt	Additional Inspector
Andrew Penman	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bradfields provides for students who primarily experience complex learning difficulties and disabilities, including speech, language, emotional, sensory, physical and autistic spectrum disabilities. Since September 2012, the school has been re-designated to include Early Years Foundation Stage children and Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils with autism and severe learning difficulties. The Lower School site has been redeveloped so that the Key Stage 3 MLD provision now includes additional and new build facilities for students with autism and in some cases additional challenging behaviours.
- Currently, the large majority of students are boys. Most are of White British background, with a small minority of mixed, Asian or Asian British backgrounds, Black Afro Caribbean, Black African and White Eastern Europeans. A few students are from families where English is not the home language. All students have a statement of special educational needs, the majority for moderate learning difficulties and a growing proportion, almost a half, for autistic spectrum disabilities.
- The school is organised into five Learning Zones where most classes are taught by the stage of their learning. The Blue Primary (including the Early Years Foundation Stage) and Blue Secondary Zones are for students whose primary need is autistic spectrum disabilities. The Yellow Zone is for lower school Key Stage 3 classes, the Red Zone is for Key Stage 4 classes and the Green Zone is for Years 12 to 14 classes. In addition, there are three separate mixed-aged 'special programme' classes in the lower and upper schools and the sixth form for students with more complex needs, including severe learning difficulties.
- The proportion of students at Bradfields eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children from service families, is well above the national average. Currently, there are a few in local authority care.
- The school uses alternative vocational courses off-site at Mid-Kent College and the Catch 22 provision at different times during the week for small groups of Key Stage 4 and sixth form students.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed since the last inspection.

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

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and make it all as good as the best by making sure that:
  - marking gives students a clear understanding of the next steps needed to improve their learning
  - there is enough challenge for all students in each class.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 is low as a result of children's complex needs. Attainment remains below average in all year groups. However, in relation to their starting points, as the inspection in 2012 determined, students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, continue to make outstanding progress and achieve particularly well, whatever their abilities in all parts of the school, including the sixth form. The proportion of students achieving GCSE accreditation has continued to improve, particularly in mathematics.
- High quality support for all students means there are now no differences in the rates of progress made by those with different levels of learning difficulties, boys and girls, the very few who speak English as an additional language or those supported by pupil premium funding and catch-up funding for literacy and numeracy in Year 7. Students known to be eligible for free school meals and the few looked after by local authorities achieve as well as and often better than others. Extra support and resources help these students make outstanding progress.
- Rapid progress is made in the key skills of literacy and numeracy, which are reinforced successfully in most lessons. Consequently, great strides are made in reading, writing and communication skills and in the use of mathematical concepts. In addition, students make excellent progress in information and communication technology skills.
- Over the last three years, at the end of Year 11, all students have continued their education either at the school or in further education colleges. Similarly, all sixth form students have continued their education or training when leaving. The achievement of older students is supported well by work experience placements, and the weekly courses they follow at Mid-Kent College or Catch 22.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff check carefully the needs and difficulties of children when they arrive. Individual targets are then set for learning and development and, the outstanding progress they make, prepares them well for moving on to Year 1.
- In almost all lessons, progress is at least good and sometimes outstanding. In a mixed-aged double creative arts lesson, using Picasso's work as examples of abstract art, students were looking at different mathematical shapes within blank examples of animal outlines they had been provided with prior to using a range of colours to complete these.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching throughout the school promotes good learning for all. Teaching in English and mathematics is very effective. Teachers plan their lessons well and make sure there is strong focus on the key skills of literacy and numeracy. In a physical education lesson, key words were written up and students were involved in assessing one another by verbal feedback on the quality of their pair-work balances. In a geography lesson, there was a strong focus throughout on identifying key words and breaking these down into sounds, when necessary, to improve students' reading skills.
- Lessons include a range of lively activities that are used to interest and motivate students and set a positive tone for learning. In a Reception class lesson, strong multi-sensory approach enlivened learning and free flow between the classroom and the outside area encouraged children's independence. In a Year 13 lesson, students completed copies of real application forms, filling in the personal details sections, which helped them to prepare for the world of work.
- Resources in lessons are used well to make sure they are matched well to students' abilities. Sometimes, however, the work set for the most able students in classes is not hard enough. Teachers skilfully ask questions throughout the lesson, as well as at the end to check how well students are learning. However, there are inconsistencies in marking of work. Although there

are positive comments, it is not always made clear to students exactly what they need to do improve their work.

- Teachers and other adults supporting in lessons work well together. They check students' understanding and use praise and encouragement very appropriately, which, despite the varying difficulties many have, keeps students motivated and on task throughout the lesson.
- Parents feel their children are taught well. Students say teachers use a variety of methods and make learning interesting, providing extra individual help where needed to support their progress.

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

- Behaviour in and around the school is good because of the consistent routines and high levels of appropriate staff supervision. Any potential misbehaviour is managed very effectively in lessons, as well as during break and lunch times. As a result, there are clear improvements for individuals and groups of students in, for example, managing their own behaviour.
- Typically, behaviour over time is improving. There have been no permanent exclusions and instances where students have not been allowed to go to school for short periods of time because of poor behaviour are falling. Recorded instances of inappropriate behaviour are also falling as a result of the successful management of students' behaviour in lessons and around the school. There have been very few instances of inappropriate racist comments and no recorded instances of homophobic comments.
- Students say the school is a safe place to be and that they get along well together. They know about the different kinds of bullying and the importance of e-safety. If there were instances of bullying they said the school would immediately deal with them. In addition, older students say that they feel safe and supported well at the off-site alternative provisions they attend.
- Attendance, regardless of pupils' circumstances, is similar to that of the national average and punctuality to school is not an issue. Students arrive happily in the morning, remain positive and friendly throughout the day and leave in a positive frame of mind at the end.
- Attitudes to learning are generally highly positive. In lessons, students work successfully as individuals, in pairs and in small groups. In a post-16 English lesson, there were group leaders who supported the learning of others very effectively.
- Without exception, parents' responses to Parent View show parents are happy with the school's care for their children. This is also confirmed by the school's own parental questionnaires and the responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

- The headteacher's drive and ambition have successfully led to continuing and sustained improvement, particularly in students' progress and achievement. In this the headteacher is supported highly effectively by his senior leaders and governors. All staff are highly committed and want the best outcomes possible for all students. All the Learning Zones, including Early Years Foundation Stage and sixth form provision, are well led.
- Senior leaders regularly and carefully check the quality of teaching, setting teachers targets to improve the quality of their work and make recommendations regarding additional responsibilities and training opportunities. Senior leaders are aware of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and are taking effective steps to address these through coaching and further training.
- As a result of the school's highly effective commitment to equality, it ensures there is no discrimination of any kind. All students, regardless of circumstances or needs, make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points in their learning and personal development.
- The subjects and topics students study mirror those in mainstream schools but have much greater breadth and depth. The extensive range of courses, both academic and vocational, is

tailored to match fully the abilities and aspirations of individuals and provides all students with equal opportunities to succeed. This makes a significant contribution to their outstanding achievement and progress, strong all-round personal development and aspirations, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- As a result of the school's highly effective links with 15 other schools across the world, students' learning about other countries and cultures is extended extremely well. Not only does the school host visitors from abroad, small groups of students and staff visit partner schools across the world. 1 in 5 students have had a foreign exchange experience in the last 3 years.
- The school works highly effectively with other professionals both locally (including an outreach service), nationally and internationally. In addition, its own team of therapists' support for students' wide-ranging learning needs and disabilities is highly effective in supporting their outstanding achievement. It also works closely with parents as a result of the work of the parent and carer partnership manager. This they appreciate, as is evident in their responses to both Parent View and the school's own regular surveys.
- The local authority knows the school well and offers a light touch, but effective, approach to continuing improvements in this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The experienced Chair of the Governing Body and his associates are highly supportive of the school. They are determined to see it improve further and are prepared to challenge senior leaders. Governors undertake appropriate training to support them in their delegated roles and have a good knowledge of how well pupils are achieving. They recognise the importance of high-quality teaching and how it might be improved. Governors check the work of the headteacher and other staff which is helping them to make decisions about how well they are working, any action that needs to be taken, training opportunities and pay. They take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and they ensure that the school is a safe place in which to work and learn. The finance committee is diligent in making sure the school's finances are balanced and oversees the use and impact of pupil premium funding and literacy/numeracy catch-up funding. Current funding is being used to provide extra support to ensure that all students, regardless of their circumstances, make the best possible progress in English and mathematics. Although the use and impact the funding for the support of primary physical education and school sport have been considered, this money has not yet been received by the school.

## 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>	119043
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	428863

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>	3–19
<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>	220
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	57
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Martin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kim Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 683990
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