

Ravenswood School

Pound Lane, Bristol, BS48 2NN

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Ravenswood is a good school. It is improving well and the school has much to commend it.
- Teaching is almost always good and sometimes outstanding. The school has improved strongly, particularly over the last year, as weaker teaching has been addressed by senior leaders and governors. This has improved teaching and raised pupils' achievements.
- The sixth form is good. The areas of study that students follow prepare them well for life after school and potential employability.
- Most pupils make good progress and some pupils make rapid progress, particularly those who receive additional funding through the pupil premium, so that they make up lost ground quickly.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. Senior leaders have used challenging targets for both pupils and staff to bring about improvements.
- Parents and carers feel their children are well looked after and make good progress and all would recommend the school to other parents or carers.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They like school and enjoy the varied activities such as dance, cookery and science.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. As a result, pupils feel extremely safe at all times.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. Pupils enjoy assemblies where they learn about managing their feelings and emotions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is of high quality to enable all pupils to make rapid progress.
- For less able pupils, the aims of lessons are not shared in a pupil friendly way to help them understand what it is they are learning.
- There is no leader of the sixth form to drive improvements in that area.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always show them how to improve.
- Occasionally learning is not practical or active enough to engage pupils' attention and questioning does not always stretch the most able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 13 lessons, most of which were joint observations with different members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- There were 32 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to analyse.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including the school's information on pupils' progress, its self-evaluation, development plans and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils and staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have complex learning difficulties and have a statement of special educational needs.
- Just under half of pupils have a diagnosis of autism and third of pupils have severe learning difficulties. A few pupils have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and moderate learning difficulties.
- Most pupils live in North Somerset with a small minority travelling from neighbouring authorities.
- The large majority of pupils are from a White British heritage.
- The school is divided into three 'hubs'; social communication, middle years and age 14 to 19. There were no pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional funding allocated by the government for certain groups of pupils; in this case, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and who are looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- Six pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve and sustain the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding and enables pupils to make rapid progress by:
 - using better questioning to enable the most able pupils to extend and develop their thinking
 - ensuring all lessons match the best practice in the school, so that pupils are motivated by activities that capture their interest and promote better learning
 - making the marking of pupils' work more consistent so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - explaining the purpose of lessons to pupils in a way which is meaningful to them, particularly for less able pupils.
- Improve the leadership of the sixth form to secure outstanding teaching and rapid progress for students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils make good progress from low starting points. Some pupils make outstanding progress.
- The pattern of pupils' progress has been uneven over the last three years and there have been some dips in areas such as mathematics and students' progress in the sixth form. However, these have been identified and addressed with energy, so that progress in these areas is now on track and the overall progress of pupils has improved strongly over the last year.
- Sixth form students make good progress. They follow courses of study which are relevant to their needs and aptitudes and they are prepared well for life after school. They learn literacy and numeracy skills to help them in everyday life and apply their knowledge in real situations such as college and work experience placements.
- There were no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection, but records of previous children show that they achieved well in developing their communication, language, personal and social development. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage consistently make good progress, and some individual children make outstanding progress.
- The school analyses pupils' progress information closely and ensures that all pupils, regardless of disability, gender or ethnic background, achieve equally well.
- Pupils who receive additional funding, either through the pupil premium grant or through the Year 7 catch-up funding, achieve outstandingly well, so that they close the gap on their peers. This is because barriers which have hindered their learning are reduced, so that they are enabled to flourish.
- Pupils achieve well in areas of communication and in the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. Pupils receive regular and systematic help to improve their reading, writing and spelling. For example, the most able pupils understand how to use suffixes in words and less able pupils learn how to break down simple words by sounding out letters and then blending them together to form the word.
- Numeracy is promoted well across the school. The most able pupils work to achieve GCSE awards and other pupils learn to use their numeracy skills in everyday situations.
- Primary sports funding has broadened the range of sports that pupils participate in and helps to develop their team working and leadership skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching is stimulating and motivates pupils well so that they are keen to learn and enjoy lessons.
- Teaching has improved substantially over the last year and there is a considerable amount of outstanding teaching. However, this has not yet been established firmly enough across all parts of the school, or over a sustained period of time.
- Displays in classes are attractive and give pupils a sense of pride. Expectations are high and pupils respond well to these.
- Teachers and support staff are well organised so that the individual needs of pupils are well met. Teachers have good subject knowledge and an excellent understanding of how pupils' special educational needs affect their learning. For example, teachers allow pupils who are very anxious to be given both time to respond and encouragement so that they can answer questions successfully.
- Teachers and support staff are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. Behaviour improves when teaching is inspirational and pupils are engrossed in learning. For example, in a science lesson, a group of pupils who had difficulty with behaviour, were impeccably behaved and worked well in pairs and learned new concepts about translucent, opaque and transparent materials.
- Teaching assistants support pupils very effectively. They are skilled in giving pupils the right amount of help to assist them to succeed. For example, in a cookery lesson help was given to enable pupils to successfully grate toppings for a pizza base.

- Teaching in the sixth form is marked by positive and supportive relationships, which boosts students' confidence and personal development well. For example, in physical education the most able students learn how to develop leadership skills so that they can lead part of a lesson with pupils from another school.
- Teaching is mostly planned to have a strong practical or active element to learning. However, on occasions the focus is too much on completing activities such as worksheets, which pupils find dull, and as a result their learning slows and is not as rapid as it could be.
- The purpose of lessons is routinely shared with pupils at the start of lessons, but sometimes the language used is too adult and too hard for some less able pupils to understand.
- The marking of pupils' work is positive and encouraging, but the setting out of how pupils could further improve their work is inconsistent across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their behaviour in and around the school is good. Some pupils have challenging behaviour and over time make good improvements. The establishment of a behaviour support team has been very effective in helping to improve pupils' behaviour and improving the skills of staff in behaviour management techniques.
- Pupils exhibit positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to participate and enjoy the humour of some teachers and this makes their learning more enjoyable and lively. Pupils take care and pride in their written work.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is promoted exceptionally well; typically through assemblies, sports, music and arts. This enriches pupils' experiences and they get along well together.
- The attitudes and behaviour of students in the sixth form are equally good and students develop their maturity in a more adult environment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils and their parents and carers report that they feel extremely safe at all times. Pupils are taught very effectively about dangers and how to keep themselves free from harm. This includes learning about all forms of bullying and including cyber bullying. As they progress through the school, pupils develop an extremely good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- Pupils' attendance is average and exclusions are rare.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, together with the governing body, are ambitious and have created a warm supportive learning environment for all pupils. The school rightly describes itself as 'An inspirational learning community, with high expectations'.
- The leadership and management of the school have brought about improvements to teaching and subsequent improvements to pupils' progress, through addressing weaker teaching.
- The range of subjects and experiences offered to pupils meet their diverse needs well and promote their very effective learning and personal development. Older students are able to gain suitable accredited awards. Students are prepared for life after school through work experience placements and college courses. Older pupils are given independent advice on future pathways after school.
- The management of setting targets for teachers is excellent. One recently appointed teacher commented that it was the best system she had experienced and had helped to improve her teaching. There is a strong link between the quality of teaching and the pay staff receive.
- Additional sources of funding have been well spent and their impact has been clearly measured. Pupil premium funding has helped pupils to close progress gaps with their peers and primary sports funding has helped to increase the skills and confidence of other staff to teach physical education. Year 7 catch-up funding has helped to prepare new pupils to the school more effectively.
- The overall leadership of both the sixth form and Early Years Foundation Stage is good, but the absence of a designated leader for the sixth form, particularly as it is an expanding part of the

school, means that developments are not as rapid as they could be in order to ensure that teaching is consistently outstanding.

- Middle leaders have an accurate view of strengths and areas for development for their areas of responsibility. They use a range of information well to pinpoint where improvements need to be made.
- The local authority has made valuable support available to the school in the form of external consultancy and this has brought about further rigour and challenge in the way the school operates.
- The school enjoys the support of parents, carers and staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are knowledgeable, committed and active in their work of supporting the school. They know there has been a significant change in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements and the importance of sustaining these improvements. They ask challenging questions of the headteacher and these are clearly recorded in governors' minutes. They have ensured that the pupil premium grant, Year 7 catch-up funding and primary sports funding have been used well and they understand the benefits and impact this has upon pupils' progress. Governors have a good understanding of assessment information and this allows them to ask searching questions. They have been actively involved in tackling underperforming teaching and have also ensured that there are clear and appropriate links between pay and teachers' performance. Governors receive good training on areas such as finance, special educational needs and safeguarding.

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	109407
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	426708

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	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Griggs
Headteacher	Philippa Clark
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2010
Telephone number	01275 854134
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