

# Pond Meadow School

Larch Road, Bellfield, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 1DR

**Inspection dates** 12–13 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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

- Highly ambitious leadership and the pursuit of excellence have resulted in excellent provision that enables pupils of all ages to make outstanding progress during their time at the school.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve exceptionally well in literacy, numeracy and in their personal development, acquiring good quality accredited qualifications.
- Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress and benefit from a wide range of vocational opportunities that contribute to their very strong personal development.
- Teaching is outstanding, enabling pupils across the school to make excellent progress, particularly in communication, literacy and numeracy and personal development.
- Teaching provides high quality challenges to all groups and makes excellent use of resources to engage pupils' interests and develop their skills.
- The very strong focus on the use of communication aids ensures that all groups of pupils have a means to communicate, answer questions and make decisions.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Attendance has improved because pupils enjoy school very much and arrive eagerly each day.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school, and their parents overwhelmingly agree.
- The high quality range of learning opportunities, subjects and topics, along with some excellent specialist facilities, engage pupils very well, contributing to their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Very well organised therapies make an excellent contribution to pupils' care and welfare.
- Leaders have built on the high quality of teaching noted at the time of the last inspection by providing regular training, rigorous monitoring and close links with local schools.
- Governors have improved their leadership and monitoring roles since the last inspection. They provide excellent support, guidance and challenge to leaders. They ensure that there is sufficient funding to support all staff and to ensure that all pupils, including those who are eligible for additional funding, achieve equally as well as other pupils.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding, preparing students extremely well for their futures.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, all jointly with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a few shorter visits to observe pupils' learning, and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, other staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' books and files.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and spoke to a parent at the school during the inspection. Inspectors also took account of 26 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils of all ages from across Surrey. The vast majority have a statement of special educational needs for their severe, multiple or profound learning difficulties. Around a third of pupils also have autism spectrum disorders. A very small minority also have visual and/or hearing impairment.
- Most pupils are White British and a few pupils speak English as an additional language. There are far more boys on roll than girls.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The school has discrete provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage from the age of two and an assessment nursery for children who do not yet have a statement for their special educational needs.
- The sixth form has its own separate accommodation. Students have opportunities to undertake a wide range of accredited courses, such as Entry Level qualifications, and spend some of their time following vocational courses at the local Guildford College.

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

- Improve the outdoor play areas for children in the youngest classes so that they have more opportunities to challenge themselves, investigate and learn outdoors.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- All groups of pupils achieve well and make outstanding progress during their time at Pond Meadow.
- Pupils make better than expected progress in communication, literacy and numeracy and in their personal development from their individual starting points, because of the strong emphasis placed on these areas. More-able pupils learn to read appropriate books well by Year 6.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties benefit from intensive support and interaction so that they learn to use technology, signs and symbols to answer questions and make choices. As a result, they make rapid gains in learning, achieving exceptionally well. They benefit from some excellent therapies to support their communication and physical skills.
- Pupils with autism spectrum disorders make outstanding progress in their use of the picture exchange communication system (PECS). This was evident in many classes. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, one pupil was able to make sentences as he responded to a question about what he could see in a picture. 'I see a princess, a knight and a dragon,' he accurately responded with his PECS symbols.
- The very few pupils with additional visual or hearing impairments benefit from specific support and specialist resources so that they can achieve as well as their classmates.
- The youngest pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, including in the assessment nursery, make an excellent start to their school lives as they benefit from high levels of attention and the strong focus on communication skills that enable them to make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well. However, their outdoor area is less exciting and does not provide enough high quality resources to promote learning or to challenge pupils.
- Bearing in mind their starting points, pupils' progress in numeracy is better than expected because of the high quality practical approaches used in all classes and because pupils consistently build on their earlier learning as they move through the school.
- Pupils have many excellent opportunities to improve their personal development and build their confidence and self-esteem. Regular performances for parents by all groups and high level challenges through the Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, for older pupils, ensure that pupils' personal development is outstanding.
- The primary sports funding has enabled younger pupils to benefit from movement and dance expertise which has resulted in improved physical skills and confidence in moving around.
- Older students benefit from additional Year 7 funding which is helping them to build on, or catch up with, their reading and writing skills through additional support.
- Sixth form students make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points. They learn exceptionally well. They all acquire Entry Level Award Scheme and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications by the time they leave the school. More-able students attain Entry Level qualifications at level 1 or level 2, preparing them all exceptionally well for their futures. Vocational experiences through the local college help to prepare them extremely well for training and employment.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils in communication, literacy and numeracy because of additional tasks and support that fully meet their individual needs and abilities.
- Parents who responded to the online questionnaire are very pleased with their child's education and overwhelmingly say that their children achieve well at the school.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching ensures that pupils' skills improve rapidly, enabling them to sustain high quality achievements. Teaching is typically focused on helping all groups of pupils to extend

their skills through exciting resources and tasks that fully meet their individual needs so that they all make excellent progress.

- Teachers' questioning challenges pupils and promotes learning. For example, in Years 8 and 9, questioning challenged pupils to comment on what they could see in pictures. They worked quickly to try to be the first to answer.
- An approach to reading using sounds and letters (phonics) enables all groups, including non readers to understand stories through symbols and/or pictures. A group of pupils with autism spectrum disorders, for example, made excellent progress as they identified initial sounds of objects and pictures, trying to be the first to say the sound.
- Those pupils who can write benefit from excellent support provided by teaching assistants who are skilled at enabling pupils to find the correct symbol or word for themselves so that they can make sentences. Technology is used very well to help pupils express an opinion or choice. Evidence in the older pupils' books and files confirms their excellent improvement over time.
- Teachers encourage pupils to work at a fast rate. This was evident in several of the younger classes, where pupils were engaged in counting tasks, singing songs and playing with dinosaurs. Pupils were regularly challenged to find 'one more' and to work at a fast pace to build on their previous skills.
- Inspirational teaching in Years 10 and 11 in food technology followed a trip to the local shops to buy ingredients. The teacher fully engaged pupils in decision making and made effective use of resources, providing pupils with some choices and autonomy in their learning.
- The assessment of pupils' skills is regular and helpful, providing a clear view of each pupil's achievements over time. Older and more-able pupils know what their targets are and have a clear idea what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants regularly record successes and promote pupils' learning, self-esteem and confidence.
- Links with parents are very good and there is a joint partnership through the use of detailed home/school diaries which enable parents to know what their children have done every day.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. It provides innovative challenges that help to develop students' excellent maturity by enabling the students to do things for themselves. This was evident as they were challenged to make hot drinks carefully and safely.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is consistently outstanding. Their exemplary behaviour in and around the school is evident in their willingness to please and the way they respond very positively to others and to staff. They thoroughly enjoy school. Attendance has risen, despite the high level of medical absences. There have been no exclusions or persistent absences in the past three years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. As a result, pupils are safe and secure at school at all times. Older pupils told the inspectors that they feel really safe. They know the importance of staying safe on the internet and in the community.
- Pupils told inspectors that there is no real bullying of any kind at the school and that all pupils get on well. Outstanding behaviour management by staff means that those pupils who have challenging behaviours learn effective ways of coping, so that over time their behaviour improves and they take part in all the activities that the school offers.
- High attendance at the extended school day each Wednesday, for pupils to take part in clubs, homework and activities, shows how much pupils and parents value the additional experiences offered.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very well promoted by the wide range of exciting learning opportunities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the rich and varied experiences that the curriculum provides and the wide range of visits that pupils experience in the older classes.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher successfully drives improvement through the school's rigorous monitoring, and by ensuring that all staff and pupils give their very best. He has high aspirations for the future and is ably supported by senior leaders, staff and governors. Together, they have built effectively on the outstanding performance of the last inspection.
- The Teachers' Standards are used very effectively in an uncompromising drive to maintain the outstanding quality of teachers' skills. Through very effective performance management, staff are fully aware of how they could improve further. There are many excellent examples of staff at all levels progressing up the pay scales and seeking promotion.
- Leaders monitor teaching rigorously so that they have a very clear view of what is working well. This helps them to keep checks on teaching and learning. Subject leaders have thoroughly developed their roles. They have reviewed their subjects and are working closely with colleagues from other schools to seek innovation. All staff receive very high quality training.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding, resulting in the very high quality of provision and outcomes for these students.
- The governing body is skilled and challenging, and members are fully involved in monitoring outcomes and measuring performance to identify the staff who deserve promotion.
- The school has strong links with the local authority responsible for placing pupils. The authority provides light touch support to the school because it recognises the school's strengths and has confidence in its performance.
- Partnerships with high quality therapeutic services, such as physiotherapy and speech therapy, and with local schools and businesses help the development of pupils' academic and personal skills and provide experiences that will benefit pupils in the future.
- The very broad range of subjects and topics taught provides outstandingly well for the needs and abilities of all groups. Successful links with families result in a consistent approach to supporting individual pupils' needs.
- The school has a productive link with a school in Shanghai that is helping pupils to learn about the wider world. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, for example, are learning to say some Chinese words and recognise a few Chinese symbols.
- Leaders have already identified the need to improve the outdoor play area for the youngest pupils, as identified by this report.
- Leaders successfully eliminate discrimination through their very effective policies and procedures which make sure relationships are positive and that all groups have equal opportunities to all the experiences on offer.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has improved since the last inspection and has an excellent range of skills which the governors use to benefit the school. They provide excellent challenge to leaders. Governors are fully involved in monitoring provision, checking teaching and behaviour and reviewing pupils' achievements. They know what is working well and what needs improving, and have a very good knowledge of the school's performance data. Members are well aware of the quality of teaching because of the good training they have received. Governors manage finances very well which means that money is very well spent to enrich pupils' learning, including the particular funding allocated for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. This money is used well to provide additional resources and experiences for these pupils, enabling them to make similar progress to their classmates. Governors know about performance management and work to ensure that the best teachers and staff are rewarded through promotion. They are fully aware of where underperformance has been tackled in the past.

## 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>	125467
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	432086

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>	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>	98
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	9
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Monk
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 March 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 532239
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