

Stanton Vale School

Thoresby Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham, NG10 3NP

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 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.

- The vast majority of pupils make good progress. Their good gains in communication skills mean that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- All pupils benefit from high levels of care for their physical and health needs. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement both in school subjects and in their personal development.
- Good teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. The amount of outstanding teaching is increasing. In most lessons pupils work hard because they enjoy their learning.
- Pupils show they feel safe and well cared for. This is because staff ensure that each pupil's individual needs are met very well.
- The sixth form is good. Students are well prepared for leaving school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their learning. This is because staff provide a wide range of learning experiences in an attractive, well-resourced classroom.
- The leadership has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Senior leaders have clear plans to ensure that everyone works together as a team to improve pupils' achievement. All staff are helped to improve their teaching and this is supporting continuous school improvement.
- The governing body makes a good contribution to the school's leadership because they ensure that the actions they take are always contribute to their clear expectations and vision for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, pupils do not make good enough progress in lessons because the targets set for them are too easy.
- Information from checks on how well pupils are doing is not always used to identify what they need to do next.
- The role of the team leaders is not yet fully developed to enable them to have a sharp enough focus on the progress made by pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, all observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read in lessons and examined pupils' work in files and books.
- The inspectors took account of the school's procedures for safeguarding. They looked at the school development plan, leaders' evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, curriculum and lesson planning, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers, and documents that track pupils' academic and personal progress.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff and a member of the local authority. A discussion was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of inspection questionnaires returned by 20 members of staff together with the school's own surveys of the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff. There were insufficient responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents) for these to be considered.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Kathy Yates | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. They all have learning difficulties, and over a half have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Additionally, many pupils have complex medical conditions or challenging behaviour.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. There are more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from service families, is above average.
- Since the last inspection, the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher for over a year, and a new headteacher was appointed in April 2012.
- A new Chair of Governors was appointed in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding in order to raise achievement further by ensuring that:
 - the targets set for pupils are always sufficiently challenging
 - information gathered from checks on pupils' progress is always used to plan what they should do next
 - sharing the outstanding practice seen in the school.
- Strengthen the role of the team leaders so that they have a sharper focus on pupil progress when monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils are working at levels lower than expected nationally when they join the school as a result of their disabilities and special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils make good progress. Compared to pupils nationally with similar starting points, the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress compares favourably with that found nationally, although their attainment is still below national expectations when they leave.
- Good achievement overall has been maintained since the previous inspection. Data in 2013 show that there has been an improvement in achievement in English and mathematics since 2012. This is particularly marked in English for secondary-aged pupils and for those with profound learning difficulties.
- Pupils with physical difficulties have made consistently good progress in developing movement since the previous inspection. This is because the school has maintained its status as a centre of excellence in movement for learning. Over the last year, pupils have begun to accelerate their already good progress in developing their communication skills.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because the teaching of reading is carefully targeted on individual pupils' needs. Younger pupils make good progress in phonics (the sounds that letters make) because staff are well trained and have good subject knowledge.
- Most groups of pupils make equally good progress. For instance, girls do just as well as the boys and pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, learn at the same good rate as other pupils. This is because there is an individual approach to meeting all pupils' varying and complex needs. Primary school sports funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are used to good effect to support eligible pupils' learning and progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because they have access to a wide range of learning experiences in an attractive and well-resourced environment both indoors and outdoors as well as to specialist teaching tailored to their individual needs.
- Data in 2013 show that achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is a strength across the school and that achievement in personal, health, social and citizenship education is a strength Key Stages 4 and 5.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress and gain a range of life skill qualifications which prepare them well for life after school. Some pupils with severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour made outstanding progress in their personal development in 2013.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the recent school survey strongly agree that pupils make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and the proportion of outstanding teaching is increasing. Teaching typically enables most pupils to make good progress and occasionally to make outstanding progress in communication, movement and personal

development.

- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to encourage pupils to move in order to control their environment. For example, pupils reach out to switch lights or a fan on and off.
- The teaching of communication is a strength because staff have expert knowledge in using signed communication. The rapidly developing system of communicating with pupils with profound difficulties through touch is having a big impact on learning. Parents agree strongly that their children are well taught and are particularly pleased by their progress in personal development and communication skills.
- The use of symbols as well as phonics to develop reading skills is very well organised. Tailored individual and group work enables pupils to learn well.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to the achievement of the pupils through good support, for example by working closely with individual pupils. This has a good effect on pupils' achievement.
- Staff use a wide range of approaches and resources to carefully plan teaching and learning in each key stage. For example, in older age groups pupils are expected to learn in more adult ways and situations. This prepares them well for leaving the school.
- Pupils are not always sufficiently well challenged by what teachers plan for them to learn. This is because targets set are sometimes too easy and occasionally activities are not reshaped to be harder as the lesson proceeds. Staff make sure that pupils know when they are successful but do not always explain what pupils need to do next.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Staff manage behaviour consistently well and this results in pupils managing their behaviour increasingly well.
- The atmosphere in school is very friendly and supportive. Pupils care about each other because they know adults care for each other and for them, and they do the same things, such as wanting others in the class to succeed. This makes a significant contribution to achievement because pupils' attitudes are very positive.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm. Adults make sure that pupils are ready to learn by ensuring that they understand what is going to happen next on the timetable. An opportunity to communicate success or kindness is never missed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. For example, school transport systems are well organised to be very safe. Staff are very well trained and this ensures that pupils' health and physical needs are attended to with great expertise and dignity.
- Pupils indicate that they feel very safe and that there is no bullying, and parents agree with this view. The process used by the school to deal with any issues that do arise is effective.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves and others safe when they are involved in learning experiences out in the community, for example when climbing during outdoor pursuits and taking care when crossing the road when on residential experiences.

- Attendance is broadly average as pupils attend whenever they can.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is persistent in his ambition for the school. His high expectations, together with the creation and development of teams of staff to put the vision into place, enable him to be a very effective leader. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and this partnership has been pivotal in bringing about school improvement.
- The leadership of teaching and performance is effective. Procedures to check the quality of teaching are in place. However, the headteacher knows that the role of the team leaders needs to develop further so that they can contribute more to, and have a sharper focus on, pupil progress when monitoring the quality of learning. There is a suitable link between teachers' performance and their progression along the pay scales.
- The school's system for keeping an eye on how well pupils are doing is well organised. This ensures that any pupil at risk of underachieving is identified and support is put in place to remove any barriers to learning.
- Staff work very well together in teams, sharing their ideas about the best ways to ensure that pupils achieve as much as they can. Leaders ensure that additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are used to good effect by providing additional opportunities for eligible pupils. It is clear that the funding is making a positive difference. Inclusion of all pupils in all experiences is given priority.
- Leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the sixth form successfully ensure that the entitlement to an age-appropriate experience is in place. Appropriate emphasis is given to progress in English and mathematics, and to preparing older pupils for the next stage of their education through independent advice and guidance.
- The school has a very accurate view of its own performance. Improvement plans are very effective because they are detailed, linked to training, reviewed carefully and contributed to by everyone. They reflect the expectations and vision set out by the governing body.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because pupils are able to reflect during high quality musical experiences and enjoy warm relationships.
- The school's range of subjects and other activities meet the needs of the pupils well. Learning is enriched by visits and residential experiences, and gives priority to meeting the health, physical, communication and learning needs of the pupils.
- Partnerships are very well developed: that with the health service personnel makes a significant contribution to pupils' well-being.
- The local authority knows the school well and targets support effectively. The local authority advice to the governors has enabled the management performance of the headteacher to be very effective in driving school improvement.
- Partnership with parents is excellent a result of very positive relationships and good communication between home and school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body contributes well to the leadership of the school. They gain first-hand evidence through the involvement they have with pupils, parents and staff. They hold leaders to account for the progress of the pupils and school improvement based on good information. Governors manage the budget effectively and make sure that all safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet requirements. They are clear about how the pupil premium, primary school sport funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are being spent and can identify the positive effect these are having on eligible pupils. Governors are fully included in information about how well teachers are performing, and know about the quality of teaching and how this links to pay.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 113041 |
| Local authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 427147 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 2–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 81 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 18 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sheran Fernie |
| Headteacher | Chris White |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 October 2010 |
| Telephone number | 0115 972 9769 |
| Fax number | 0115 946 3566 |
| Email address | info@stantonvale.derbyshire.sch.uk |

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