

# The Collett School

Lockers Park Lane, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1TQ

**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. They quickly settle into their routines and develop an enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils continue to make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school. A significant number of pupils at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 make outstanding progress.
- Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and create a very positive climate for learning in their classrooms. Pupils make good use of well-chosen resources to support their learning. As a result, they are eager to learn, remain focused on their tasks and do their best.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they show a good understanding of how to stay safe. Attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Nearly all pupils attend regularly.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and direction for the school. He enjoys the full confidence of parents and receives good support from senior leaders and governors. As a result, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Achievement, teaching and leadership and management have moved from requiring improvement to good. The school demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and a few weaknesses remain in teaching at Key Stage 4.
- Teachers do not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Occasionally, pupils of different abilities do not acquire new knowledge, skills or understanding quickly enough because teachers give them work that is either too hard or too easy.
- New subject leaders have yet to monitor the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress in their subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons jointly with senior leaders and saw nearly all teachers teach. They heard a few pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work jointly with subject leaders.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, staff with leadership responsibilities and four members of the governing body. A telephone discussion was held with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors met with many parents following a celebration assembly, had a telephone discussion or considered written correspondence from others, and looked at 48 responses to the online survey Parent View. They also examined the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including safeguarding policies, records of behaviour, attendance figures, minutes of governing body meetings, the self-evaluation summary and the school development plan. They looked at records of pupils' progress since the previous inspection jointly with senior leaders.

## Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Collett School provides for pupils with a range of complex disabilities and special educational needs from the north, south and west of Hertfordshire. The majority have autistic spectrum disorders and a significant proportion have speech, language and communication needs and moderate learning difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils are mainly taught in mixed-aged classes. There are four children of Reception age in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some of the oldest pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend West Herts College or Oaklands College for an extended session each week to follow vocational courses leading to accreditation.
- The proportion of pupils who are admitted to school throughout the year is above average.
- Most pupils are White British. A small proportion speak English as additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care or from families where a parent is in the armed forces.
- At the previous inspection, the school was judged as requiring improvement. Since then, Ofsted has carried out two monitoring visits to check on the school's progress in its areas for improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant turnover of staff. In particular, new subject leaders have been appointed. A new Chair of the Governing Body and new governors are in post. Classrooms, the library and the reception area have been refurbished.
- Since January 2014, a local college has been using the school as an alternative provider for some of its sixth form students. As students remain exclusively on the roll of the college and the school is merely acting as an alternative provider, this provision was not included as part of this inspection.

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

- Raise achievement, eliminate the few remaining weaknesses in teaching so that it is consistently good or better, and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching across the school by making sure that:
  - marking always makes clear to pupils how to improve their learning
  - pupils are always given tasks which they neither find too easy nor too difficult so that they quickly acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills
  - subject leaders monitor the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress in their subjects across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made good progress in the relatively short time since joining the Reception Year, particularly in their communication and social skills. They settle into routines quickly and are happy and eager to learn. This is because all adults work seamlessly together and closely with parents to ensure that children build their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically across all areas of learning.
- Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. This is seen in their books, learning in lessons and in the school's detailed information about their progress over time. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make at least good progress and a significant number make outstanding progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, nearly all pupils make at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A significant number of pupils make outstanding progress in these three subjects. Similarly, by the end of Key Stage 3 nearly all make expected progress and a significant number of pupils are making outstanding progress in reading and writing. This is because pupils learn effectively and build new knowledge, skills and understanding year-on-year as a result of good teaching and well-planned lessons.
- All groups of pupils make equally good progress, including those with autistic spectrum disorders, those with speech, language and communication needs, and those at an early stage of learning English. This is because pupils benefit from well-chosen resources such as communication aids, real-life objects to refer to, and signing and symbols to enable them to access and speed up their learning.
- More-able pupils with moderate learning difficulties make equally good progress as their classmates. This is because teachers make good use of questioning skills in lessons to extend their learning and usually ensure that learning opportunities are sufficiently challenging. For example, the oldest pupils are entered for GCSE subjects and the younger ones are provided with novels matched to their level of ability.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make the same progress in reading, writing and mathematics as their classmates. This is because they receive good additional support in literacy and numeracy to enable them to catch up with the rest of the class.
- Pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in reading and writing because staff are skilful in showing pupils how to link the sounds that letters make and encourage them to use this to read unfamiliar words and spell words in their writing accurately. They make good progress in mathematics because there is a strong focus on developing understanding of mathematical language and linking this closely to number operations and practical problem-solving activities.
- Pupils at Key Stage 4 make good progress in work-related learning. Since the previous inspection an increasing proportion of pupils have gained relevant qualifications, including at Entry Level and GCSE. These prepare them well for the next stage of their lives. Those pupils who attend the local colleges of further education also make good progress. As a result, since the last inspection all pupils have successfully entered further education to pursue courses they are interested in and nearly all have sustained these places over time.
- The school's accurate data show that pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are making good progress. However, pockets of underachievement, where pupils are not always acquiring new knowledge skills and understanding quickly enough, still remain where teaching requires

improvement. This is because pupils are sometimes given work which is either too easy or too difficult.

## **The quality of teaching is good**

- Inspection evidence, including school data, records of the school's monitoring of lessons, discussions with pupils and work seen in pupils' books, confirms the school's view that teaching is typically good. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Some teaching at these key stages is outstanding. Most teaching at Key Stage 4 is now good.
- Staff maintain excellent relationships with pupils and create a stimulating atmosphere for learning by making good use of resources in practical situations. For example, in a mathematics lesson, older pupils enthusiastically applied their mathematical skills in measuring the length of the floor in preparation for building a cabin in the school grounds. They quickly deepened their knowledge of the importance of care and accuracy in measuring to the nearest centimetre.
- In another mathematics lesson, younger pupils moved the hands of a clock to show various times. They related these times to significant parts of the school day by answering what happens at 12 o'clock and what happens at three o'clock. The youngest children eagerly created tracks in shaving foam and moved to an action song while clapping accurately to the rhythm, showing great enjoyment in making music. Good teaching enabled the children to develop social interaction skills by working together and learning well.
- The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good as teachers have high expectations in ensuring that pupils apply their skills across a range of subjects such as history, food technology and science. Pupils make good use of signing, symbols, pictures and real-life objects to communicate, deepen their understanding and apply these skills in learning different subjects.
- Pupils with more complex disabilities and special educational needs learn as well as other pupils. This is because teaching assistants and teachers work well with outside professionals, such as speech and language therapists, closely planning activities which develop pupils' speech, language communication and social skills. Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and those who arrive at school other than at the usual times of admission receive equally good additional support for their learning to enable them to catch up with their classmates.
- Pupils usually develop new knowledge, skills and understanding quickly because teachers and other adults give them learning tasks which they can do and which challenge their learning further. However, this is not always the case. On the few occasions when teaching requires improvement, some pupils find learning either too easy or too difficult.
- Although teachers' use of information from the checks made on pupils' progress has improved, there are still occasions when the work set is not at just the right level. In addition, pupils' work is not marked consistently enough: as a result, pupils do not always know how to improve their learning.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In nearly all lessons and around the school, pupils are well behaved and respond well to the consistent management of their behaviour by staff. Pupils are rewarded for their good behaviour and effective sanctions are applied for any misconduct. As a result, the number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour and the use of physical restraint for more challenging behaviours has greatly reduced.
- Pupils respond well to the strong community and family atmosphere in the school, where every individual is respected and valued. As a result, they are polite, courteous and respectful towards adults, and show kindness, care and consideration for one another. This was particularly noticeable in the whole-school celebration assembly attended by 30 parents where pupils spontaneously applauded and celebrated the success of their classmates when they received awards.
- Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes to learning and these are having a positive effect on the progress they are making. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning new things; they listen to the views of others and follow adults' instructions. Only on a few occasions where teaching requires improvement, pupils switch off from learning.
- Pupils say there is no bullying in school and that if there were any such incidents, staff would deal with them effectively. They know why good behaviour is important and have a developing awareness of the different types of bullying.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils move safely between classrooms and other areas in the school. They play safely at lunchtimes and breaktimes. They know how to keep themselves safe outside school, for example on school trips, on arrival and on departure from school. Pupils use computers safely and learn about the safe use of mobile phones. Pupils who attend the local college also stay safe as a result of thorough assessments of potential risks and close liaison with college staff to ensure pupils' safety. Parents, pupils and staff all believe pupils are safe in school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage stay safe and happily settle into their routines because staff work well together and liaise closely with parents to assure children's well-being and safety.
- Attendance has risen steadily since the previous inspection from below average to broadly average as a result of the effective promotion of regular attendance. Pupils, other than those who are absent due to illness, hospitalisation or for therapy, attend regularly and are punctual to lessons.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has gained the full confidence of parents and established high staff morale in driving school improvement forward. He is well supported by his senior leaders in aspiring to this becoming an outstanding school.
- Senior leaders' robust use of much improved and more accurate data since the last inspection and their rigorous monitoring of pupils' learning have led to the school's accurate view of itself. This is particularly the case in relation to the quality of teaching and the impact of leadership and management. They have made good use of the outcomes to identify clear priorities for school improvement and used these to create realistic and challenging objectives to improve

staff performance.

- The management of staff performance is robust. Objectives to improve performance are securely based on the national teaching standards. Leaders provide good opportunities for training, especially to improve the quality of teaching and for newly appointed staff.
- Leaders have effectively reviewed the secondary curriculum to adapt it to the changing intake of pupils and the severity of their needs. Pupils in each year group of Key Stages 3 and 4 now have one teacher for English and mathematics and this is already raising pupils' achievements. Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has ensured that children make good progress because the quality of provision is good.
- Throughout the school there is strong emphasis on promoting literacy and numeracy across different subjects and in working closely with outside professionals, such as the educational psychologist and health professionals, to ensure all pupils fully engage with learning. There is a wide variety of after-school clubs, such as drama and football, together with school trips and residential visits to enrich pupils' learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through the many opportunities for reflection, raising self-esteem and building self-confidence. Pupils develop a clear awareness of diversity through good role models of staff, the celebration of world festivals and learning about different world religions.
- Leaders make good use of the primary school sport funding to purchase additional gym and playground sports equipment, and for additional physical education activities such as horse riding and swimming. As a result, pupils exercise more and stay healthy. At playtimes, there has been an increase in participation in sports.
- Good use has been made of pupil premium funding to provide additional support for pupils in literacy and numeracy and also to fund school trips for those who are eligible for this additional funding. As a result, these pupils enjoy their learning and are doing as well as their classmates.
- The local authority is providing good levels of support and challenge to the school, by regularly reviewing its work, providing clear targets for the school to achieve and supporting training and professional development of staff and governors.
- The headteacher has recently created a leadership team of subject leaders who have already made a good start in auditing provision. They have used this to develop a robust subject action plan to monitor the impact of teaching on the learning of all groups of pupils across the school within their subjects. This is not fully implemented and has yet to have full impact on the learning and progress of all pupils throughout the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are effective in ensuring that all legal requirements are met, especially for safeguarding. They visit the school regularly to check on the safety and well-being of pupils, and ensure that all policies, procedures and training relating to safeguarding are up to date. They have an accurate view of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress through first-hand visits to classrooms as well as receiving headteacher reports. They are using data on pupils' progress to identify clear targets for improvement and shape the performance management objectives of the headteacher. Governors are also ensuring that good teaching is rewarded and weaknesses in teaching are addressed. They are holding the school to account for its use of additional funding, for example the pupil premium, and know that these pupils are making the same progress as their classmates as a result of good additional support.

## 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>	117672
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	431621

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>	4–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	118
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Nawas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Hoult-Allen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 September 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 398988
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