

Beacon Hill School and Specialist College

Rising Sun Cottages, Wallsend. NE28 9JW

Inspection dates 5-6 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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.

- The inspiring headteacher and leadership team have successfully created a school in which all staff have a deep understanding of every pupil, enabling them to meet individual needs very effectively.
- Management of the quality of teaching is highly effective and this has ensured that pupils have made continued and increasing progress since the last inspection.
- The governing body has a broad range of experience and professional skills that they bring to the school. These are used exceedingly well to make sure they have an accurate view of the school and to challenge and support the leadership team fully.
- From very low starting points, all groups of pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, make outstanding progress. The development of the pupils' communication and language skills are central to the school and this allows pupils to make excellent progress.
- The most able pupils become confident in travelling independently and keen to participate in their work experience.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding due to the excellent teaching and highly positive relationships, which encourage pupils to communicate what they want and need.
- The sixth form is outstanding and students make exceptional progress there because they spend an increasing amount of time applying their skills in an adult situation.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in their literacy and mathematics skills. These are taught across a wide range of subjects, as well as individually. They apply these skills extremely well to all lessons leading to valuable achievements in other subjects.
- Teaching is outstanding and has continued to improve since the last inspection. This is due to the school's strong commitment towards professional development, the innovative ways that staff help pupils and the high expectations the staff have for each individual pupil.
- Most teaching helps pupils to understand what they have learnt, but occasionally opportunities are missed to share this with them.
- Pupils' work is regularly collected and assessed. However, there are not yet enough opportunities to share examples of pupils' work to assure judgements on the levels of pupils' attainment is precisely accurate.
- Behaviour and safety are exemplary. Pupils quickly build their confidence and self-esteem which leads to highly positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons and part lessons taught by 13 teachers.
- The headteacher and deputy headteachers conducted four joint observations of teaching with inspectors.
- The inspector and the headteacher looked at pupils' work across the classes in the school.
- The inspection team had discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of the governing body, pupils and a school improvement partner.
- The inspection team looked at the work of the school, including pupils' behaviour and analysed documentation in relation to attendance, safeguarding and the school's system for checking on pupils' progress.
- Forty-six responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available to help plan the inspection. The inspectors formally met a group of parents during the school day to listen to their comments.

Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Stephenson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The majority of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, although some children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are in the school for assessment and do not yet have a statement. The school provides for severe and profound multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum condition.
- This large special school draws the majority of pupils from North Tyneside local authority.
- There are two sites: one for the Early Years Foundation Stage, primary and secondary age pupils; the other for post 16 provision is located five miles away in Queen Alexandra College, North Shields.
- The vast majority of pupils are boys of White British origin.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than the national average.
- One-third of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school is a regional centre for Tyne and Wear training for independent travelling.
- The school provides an outreach service for sensory impairment and portage services on behalf of the local authority.
- The school has Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People Gold, International Schools and Eco Schools award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To further develop outstanding practice in teaching by:
 - ensuring that feedback given to pupils on their learning always helps them understand fully what it is they have learnt
 - ensuring that pupils' work is assessed with even greater consistency and accuracy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding.

- All pupils, as a result of their special educational needs and disabilities, are working well below national expectations when they start school. Due to outstanding teaching, achievement is consistently good or better in all classes.
- In lessons, communication and language skills are an important feature in supporting the outstanding rates of progress, as well as the exceptional skills of staff to make sure each pupil's needs are met. Where pupils are able to read they make at least good progress from year to year.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make outstanding progress. A wide range of resources, such as puppets, photos and music are used well to maintain children's concentration. Staff constantly chatted to and encouraged both verbal and sign/symbolic forms of communication, as well as encouraging listening and doing the actions for the rhymes.
- Each pupil's skills and aptitudes in literacy and numeracy progress quickly as they move through the school. By Key Stage 2, they are much more confident to write and use number in other subjects, and from Key Stage 3 onwards, the ability of pupils to use these skills in real-life situations develops rapidly. Consequently, many leave with a qualification in the functional use of both English and mathematics, which is extremely valuable for their future lives.
- Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress supported by an outstanding curriculum that is central to developing their independence and readiness for their working and social lives in the future.
- There is no difference between the achievement of any age group or between boys and girls. Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals make progress in line with that of their peers in the school. Additionally, there is no disparity between the achievement of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds or abilities. The most able pupils for example, make outstanding progress. This clearly shows that the school is highly effective promoting equality of opportunity for all.

The quality of teaching is outstanding.

- Consistently good and outstanding teaching across the school promotes admirable attitudes to learning in all pupils. Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching show that it has improved year on year following the last inspection.
- Staff use their excellent subject knowledge to quickly move on pupils' learning. In mathematics, pupils confidently named two-dimensional shapes on the whiteboard, recognising them in different places around their classroom.
- All staff are highly skilled in meeting the communication, physical and social needs of all pupils. Excellent routines both in the classrooms and around the school mean that little learning time is lost as pupils move from one activity to the next.
- Parents were pleased to say, 'It's been magical for us. My son communicates now and that has happened since he's been at this school.'
- Teachers and support staff plan learning very effectively so that it closely reflects individual pupil targets and next steps in learning. As a result, each pupil learns exceptionally well.
- The work in pupils' files shows that pupils' skills and abilities are assessed regularly, with examples kept of pupils' good and outstanding progress. However, this information is not consistently checked for accuracy on the level of the work achieved.
- Pupils enjoy their learning enormously. In a meeting with the inspector, one pupil proudly showed his timetable for travelling independently and the expectations of him to work out times and buses to get to the gym.
- Teachers use questioning very well to check pupils' understanding systematically as lessons proceed. Although teachers give regular feedback to pupils on their learning, they are not always

consistent in telling them exactly what they have learnt.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's skills and knowledge are assessed thoroughly. This, and the variety of opportunities to investigate, explore and to be creative, support the rapid progress made in children's communication and social skills.
- In the sixth form, students develop excellent skills to prepare them for the next steps in their lives. Students' project work with a film company is a particularly exciting aspect of their learning which has been acknowledged as being of a very high standard, and the numerous Arts awards achieved, including the National Young Filmmakers award.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding.

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Although many pupils enter the school with very low attainment and very complex needs, they soon settle into the excellent routines in school. Their behaviour and any other difficulties are managed extremely well and with excellent care and personal consideration.
- The excellent behaviour of pupils clearly shows in their willingness to work hard. One pupil said, 'I like working in school and I help around school. I do hard work like numbers.'
- High expectations, clear boundaries for behaviour and conduct, positive staff role models and effective use of praise all contribute to pupils feeling exceptionally safe at all times.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school is highly safety-conscious and has an extremely effective curriculum to ensure that the teaching of safety is rigorous to prepare pupils for work and social situations. In lessons, pupils spoke confidently about staying safe. One pupil said to another, 'You must remember to wear your helmet when riding to school.' They demonstrate an excellent grasp of how to avoid risk and danger.
- There have been no exclusions and attendance is above average when compared to similar schools. This is because of the highly effective engagement and communication with families, and happy pupils. As one pupil said to the inspector, 'I love the school and everyone in it.'
- The school environment is a safe and secure place to be and all pupils spoken with stated that they felt very safe; their parents agree with this point of view.
- The school benefits from significant expertise in information and communication technology (ICT). As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of e-safety and the risk of bullying is reduced, including for those pupils with communication difficulties.

The leadership and management are outstanding.

- The headteacher leads the school with enthusiasm, commitment and a strong belief that all children will have the opportunity to develop independence and ability to make informed choices. Together with the leadership team and the governing body they provide a clear view for the school's continuous improvement.
- Leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the school's performance and they effectively work in partnership with other schools and the local authority to review their developments and ensure continued improvement. For example, they are designing an ICT tracking system on pupils' progress with the local authority to present information for a range of purposes.
- The leadership team has a clear priority of ensuring high quality teaching and learning. Through their checks and involvement with the governing body, they have made sure that what is learnt from the checks made on teachers' performance are used to determine what training and salaries staff should receive.
- The staff are a very strong team who are highly supportive of each other. When new expertise is developed, they quickly provide training for each other to better support the pupils. Recently, a highly-skilled teacher provided cued articulation training and this has now being used across the school.
- The excellent curriculum is firmly focused on promoting pupils' independence and readiness for

work and life beyond school. The pupils' experience of this highly positive and enterprising curriculum encourages frequent practise of their developing skills. For example, following a visit to a sports centre, pupils precisely recalled information signs that covered safety, opening times and facilities.

- The extensive range of enrichment activities including visits, guest 'robots' and after-school activities add to the enjoyment and excitement of pupils' learning. This has an extremely positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and contributes exceptionally well to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Safeguarding meets requirements, with much effective practice strengthening the high quality of care and support for pupils and their families.
- Pupils, staff and parents feel that they are highly valued in the school community. The school's ethos and beliefs promotes equality of opportunity extremely well and tackles discrimination promptly.
- The school benefits from being part of a trust where sharing good practice is promoted. This sharing has promoted identifying best practice and provided high quality professional development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are totally committed to the school and its pupils. They give excellent support and know its strengths and weaknesses very well. This is evident in their understanding of the outstanding quality of teaching and learning. Through their involvement in school and working with the leadership team, governors have identified the priorities for further improvements in teaching. They are particularly proud of the school's significant expertise in promoting pupils' independent travel and how it is able to support pupils across the region.
 - Governors make highly effective use of performance management to continuously improve outcomes for pupils.

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	131544
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	431578

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	3-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Clapperton
Headteacher	Helen Jones
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2011
Telephone number	0191 6433000
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