

# Grove Park School

Church Road, Crowborough, TN6 1BN

**Inspection dates** 6–7 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The school meets its core aim of providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum within a happy, caring and stimulating learning environment where pupils achieve their best according to their ability. Their achievement is good.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points to the end of Key Stage 4, particularly in literacy and numeracy, as well as in their communication skills.
- Children attending the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress. They are prepared particularly well for learning, which enables them to move on successfully to the next stage of their education at the school.
- The sixth form is good. All students continue into the sixth form and stay for three years. They make good progress and are prepared well for the next stage of their education, other training opportunities or, for some, moving into sheltered living accommodation.
- Pupils and students say the school and other colleges they attend are safe places in which to learn. The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective, including for the other sites used.
- Pupils' and students' behaviour in and around the school and at the other sites used is outstanding. Their attitudes to learning are excellent because lessons are interesting.
- The headteacher, her senior leaders, governors, and others with posts of responsibility provide good leadership and management of the school. Consequently, improvements in the quality of learning and teaching are being made.
- Governors are increasingly more effective, active and supportive of the school. They are successful in holding the school to account to make sure it meets its core aims.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all adults who support in the classroom are consistent in the way they work to improve pupils' learning outcomes.
- A lack of access to good quality specialist practical facilities limits the range of subjects and activities children and pupils can follow.
- Staff are not consistent in the way they support pupils to recognise written words after using visual communication symbol cards.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by 14 different teachers, seeing every class at each site. Meetings were held with mixed groups of secondary-aged pupils and sixth form students. Meetings were also held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, others with posts of responsibility, the Chair of the Governing Body and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 48 responses to the staff questionnaire. In addition, inspectors took into account the 34 responses to the school's most recent parent and carer questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including its checks on how well it is doing, improvement planning, information on pupils' progress, documents used by senior leaders to check the school's work and governing body documentation, as well as records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Veronica Young

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils who have complex learning difficulties, which includes those with moderate, complex, severe, profound or multiple needs. Some pupils also have additional physical and/or sensory impairment. There are increasing numbers with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and associated speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The school is divided into three separate sections: primary, secondary and sixth form. The secondary department is co-located on the Beacon Academy secondary site and has some access to its specialist facilities. The sixth form is co-located on the Beacon Academy sixth form site.
- Pupils with ASD are supported across the school by teaching assistants and therapists led by a specialist teacher.
- The school has a wide catchment area encompassing all the north and western area of East Sussex including Newhaven, Lewes and up to the West Sussex and Kent borders.
- Currently, the large majority of pupils are boys. The very large majority are of White British or mixed backgrounds. A few are from Black or Black British, Asian or Asian British or Chinese backgrounds. A very few are from homes where English is not the home language. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils at the school eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support those known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children from service families, is well above the national average. Currently, there are a few pupils in local authority care and none from service families.
- Pupils new to the school are usually admitted in September but there are also admissions throughout the year.
- A new headteacher was appointed in March 2013.
- One small group of sixth form students and a second group of Key Stage 4 students are accompanied by school staff for one day weekly at Sussex Downs College, Lewes, and Plumpton College.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and make it all as strong as the best by making sure that:
  - all adults who support in the classroom are consistent in the way they work to improve pupils' learning outcomes
  - teachers and other adults who support in the classroom provide greater support for pupils to recognise written words after using visual communication symbol cards.
- Provide more access to specialist practical facilities to broaden further the range of subjects and activities children and pupils can follow.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage, careful assessment shows they are working at levels well below those expected for their ages. However, they make rapid progress against the early learning goals assessment targets and are ready to move on to learn in Year 1.
- Across the school, pupils are set individual targets for learning, particularly in the important skills of literacy, numeracy and communication, as well as targets for personal development to support these skills.
- By the end of Year 11, in relation to their starting points, pupils make good progress and achieve well as a result of the help and support they receive from all adults working in the room, as well as from therapists and other specialist professionals. All join the sixth form and continue their education for a further three years.
- Regular checking shows sixth form students' progress continues to be good and is being sustained in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and communication skills, as well as in the broad range of nationally accredited courses they follow. This prepares them very well for life beyond the school. School data show that those who leave at the end of Year 14 sustain their placements after leaving. Currently, no students are entered for GCSE courses.
- Students also make good progress in the courses they follow at local colleges; the provision in these colleges is good, and this contributes well to their overall progress at the school. Achievement is good across the school irrespective of individual special needs or disabilities.
- The most able pupils make good progress because teachers set tasks which are hard enough. Progress towards pupils' individual targets and their small steps in learning are carefully recorded both during and after lessons. New or revised targets are set when appropriate.
- As a result of good quality teaching and effective support for individuals, there are no particular differences in the rates of progress made by pupils with different levels of learning difficulties, by boys and girls, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, those from homes where English is not the home language and those children looked after by local authorities. Similarly, there are no particular differences in the rates of progress made by different groups of sixth form students.
- The progress of pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding is in line with that of their classmates in literacy, numeracy and communication skills across the school. As with their classmates, their attainment levels in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11 differ considerably because of the wide variation in their starting points. The school has only recently received Year 7 catch-up funding and has not yet received its full allocation of primary school sports funding.
- In almost all lessons, pupils' progress is typically good. There is effective support for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and communication skills. In a primary science lesson, pupils used visual communication symbol cards confidently to decide whether their cake mixtures were dry or wet or, with delighted 'yuks' and 'yums'. In a secondary mathematics lesson, as a result of challenging tasks suitable for every pupil's needs, all improved their 'addition' skills using simple numbers.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good learning is the norm as a result of good teaching and interesting activities, particularly in English and mathematics. In an English lesson, pupils checked the resources provided by the teacher to learn about Helen Keller's disabilities, including simulating being blind and deaf. In a sixth form mathematics lesson, students used a range of two-dimensional shapes to design the exterior front view of a house. Students' enjoyment of successful learning was evident as they took turns to look at and comment on each other's work.
- Good verbal feedback in lessons helps pupils stay interested and on task. This was very effective

in a secondary science lesson where pupils were testing for acidic and alkaline properties of liquids in a well-planned and structured experiment. There are, though, occasions when pupils do not make as much progress as they should because some adults are too quick to point out the answers.

- Resources are planned well so as to meet the learning needs of all pupils in the lessons, which results in lively activities. In a primary literacy lesson, pupils were involved in a range of activities such as working on the sounds that letters make, finding words in a 'first' dictionary, practising writing out words and making a 'sensory' story.
- Teachers and all adults in the room have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Their effective management of pupils' behaviour and frustrations is instrumental in enabling pupils to make good progress towards both their individual learning and behaviour targets. In a lesson for ASD pupils, pupils were settled and ready to learn prior to setting the main individual literacy tasks as a result of staff's sensitive yet purposeful support.
- Staff use a range of communication methods to support pupils' learning, including signing and the use of visual communication cards. Though the use of the latter is highly effective, pupils' transition to recognising the written word being displayed is not always supported well enough, which sometimes slows their progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning is outstanding because teachers improve children's communication skills and prepare them well for learning in Key Stage 1. For example, in an Early Years Foundation Stage lesson, children were involved in listening, looking, signing, counting and pressing switches to communicate.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View consider their child is taught well. Pupils and students who spoke with the inspectors said they thought lessons were interesting and that they learned lots of new things.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is because the school is a happy and very well-managed community, with high levels of adult support and consistent routines throughout the day, including arrival and leaving times. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour both at school, including in the sixth form, and when working off-site or on visits accompanied by staff they know. They behave particularly well in all settings.
- Excellent relationships between all adults and pupils result in an enjoyable, purposeful and safe atmosphere throughout the whole school day. Pupils respect the fabric of the building and its surroundings, including, in the secondary school, the opportunity to use the co-located mainstream secondary school's dining hall. Here they learn important social skills, as well as using cash to pay for lunch.
- Typically, behaviour over time is outstanding. The school is highly effective in addressing potential discrimination, as shown by the fact that there have been no recorded instances of bullying, homophobic bullying, sexual misconduct or racist incidents since the previous inspection. In addition, there have been no permanent exclusions or instances where students have not been allowed to go to school for short periods of time because of poor behaviour. Detailed records also show that day-to-day instances of poor behaviour have declined significantly over the past two years.
- Attitudes to learning are excellent because lessons are interesting and activities provided are matched carefully to pupils' learning needs and abilities. In a mixed-age lesson for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, pupils' excitement and delightful facial expressions showed their enjoyment in using switches with pictures of snacks to make their own choices. In addition, the broad range of subjects and other activities provided also motivates students very well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. This applies to both the school and to the college courses sixth form students attend, as well as to other off-site visits and activities the school organises. This is overseen effectively by the governing body. Internet safety has a high

priority, with pupils being taught about potential dangers when online.

- Pupils told inspectors that they know about different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying. They feel safe, are taught how to stay safe and said there was no bullying, although, on occasion, some do 'fall out'.
- The school's effectiveness in maintaining good levels of attendance, including working hard to improve the attendance of a few persistent absentees, has meant overall attendance rates have been sustained. As all students are transported to school, punctuality at the start of the day is reliant on local traffic conditions.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View are happy with the school's care for their children and that the school makes sure pupils behave well. This was also confirmed by the responses to the staff questionnaire.

## The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed headteacher's strong drive and ambition for school improvement, particularly in learning and teaching, are shared by staff and governors. Self-evaluation is accurate but the outcomes of recent improvement planning set in motion by the new headteacher have yet to be fully realised. All staff are highly committed to ensuring the best learning outcomes possible for all pupils and preparing them successfully for life beyond the school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptionally well led and managed. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress. Clear targets for teachers to improve further the quality of their work are then set.
- As a result of the school's constant commitment to equality, all pupils, regardless of circumstances or needs, make good progress in relation to their starting points in their learning and all-round personal development.
- The subjects and topics pupils study are tailored to match fully the abilities and individual needs of all. The strong focus on developing pupils' key skills of literacy, numeracy and communication prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Other extra activities make learning even more interesting. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- However, the school recognises that lack of access to good quality specialist practical facilities limits the range of subjects and activities that can be offered. Access to specialist secondary facilities at the Beacon Academy secondary site is complicated because of the timings of potential use.
- Highly effective support from other professionals and therapists supports pupils' wide-ranging learning and personal needs particularly well.
- The school has close links with parents, including providing a range of appropriate information on its website as well as two parent support groups. This they appreciate, as is evident in the positive responses of the very large majority to Parent View and the school's own latest parent and carer surveys.
- The local authority currently offers light-touch support to this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The experienced Chair of the Governing Body and her governors are improving their effectiveness in working with the school. They are prepared to challenge senior leaders, if necessary, in order to sustain improvements. They have a good understanding of performance data, of the quality of teaching throughout the school and of the use of performance management. Governors' specific areas of expertise support their effectiveness in their roles. For example, a member with responsibility for safeguarding checks that procedures and protocols are effective in the school and that off-site provision is also a safe place in which to learn. After checking the work of the headteacher and other staff, governors make appropriate decisions about how well they are working and any action that needs to be taken, as well as

about training opportunities and pay.

- The finance and general purposes committee is highly effective in ensuring the school's finances are balanced, and in carefully overseeing the use and impact of additional funds. Current funding is being used to further develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and developing information and communication technology to support learning. Not all the allocated funding for the support of primary physical education and school sport has yet been received by the school so there is insufficient evidence of its impact.

## 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>	114688
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	432055

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>	3–19
<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>	95
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	14
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patricia Gray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Wellman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 663018
<b>Fax number</b>	01892 663018
<b>Email address</b>	office@grove-park.e-sussex.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

