

Woodside School

Halt Robin Road, Belvedere, Bexley DA17 6DW

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires Improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires Improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The rate of progress for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in developing their communication, language and literacy skills, is not yet good because teaching does not provide work that meets their individual needs well enough.
- Specialist resources and approaches are not used well enough to engage these pupils in learning and expectations of what they can achieve are not high enough.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have not been rigorous enough in monitoring the quality of teaching and bringing about improvement, to ensure that all groups of pupils, including those with autistic spectrum disorders, make at least good progress and achieve equally well.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and make good gains in learning about the world of work through high quality vocational experiences that prepare older pupils well for their futures.
- Behaviour is good because it is well managed. Pupils are typically polite and helpful and regularly help others. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Attendance has improved and is similar to most other special schools.
- The curriculum provides some exciting activities, including outdoor learning, which play a valuable role in engaging pupils and promoting effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons, many jointly with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a few shorter visits to observe pupils' learning, and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to several different groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, other staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and two local authority representatives.
- 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 21 parent responses to the online survey (Parent View) and also took account of the 60 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils from across Bexley who are supported by a statement of special educational needs for their moderate learning difficulties. Pupils have a wide range of attainment when they enter the school.
- About 40% of pupils also have additional autistic spectrum disorders.
- About 24% of pupils have additional speech and language difficulties and a few others have behavioural difficulties.
- Most pupils are White British. A few are from African or West Indian backgrounds and a small proportion speak English as an additional language. There are far more boys 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 well above average.
- About 60% of pupils in Years 7 and 8 benefit from Catch-up funding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching enables pupils with autistic spectrum disorders to make better progress in all lessons in their communication skills, language and literacy by:
 - having high expectations and planning tasks that more closely meet their individual needs and abilities
 - making better use of resources and approaches that engage them in learning
 - ensuring that staff are better trained in the use of these pupils' work plans and work-bays to better promote their achievement.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, including governance, on the teaching of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders by more rigorously monitoring lessons and by ensuring that teachers receive regular and appropriate training to meet these pupils' needs and abilities.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not yet good because not all groups of pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders do not make good enough progress, particularly in their communication skills, language and literacy. Their progress in these areas is too slow because too little is expected of them in lessons. Tasks and resources do not regularly match their individual needs or their abilities.
- Following a story for example, a few younger pupils made little progress because tasks were inappropriate to their abilities and not enough was prepared for each pupil to do. As a result they did not make enough progress in improving their communication and language skills.
- Progress dips when resources to support communication are not available. This was evident in Years 7 to 9, where pupils with autism were learning about the stories of 'Sinbad' through drama. Opportunities to improve pupils' language and communication skills were lost because there were too few resources available to help them offer opinions and express their ideas.
- Other pupils, including the few who have speech and language difficulties and the few who have behavioural difficulties, make better progress in communication, language and literacy.
- Reading skills for the majority of other pupils at the school are developing well and there are many opportunities for pupils to read aloud and to adults. Younger pupils with moderate learning difficulties in Year 3, for example, were eager to read to an inspector and showed confidence and enjoyment in their reading, using their phonic skills well to build unknown words. School data show that other pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading.
- Communication skills for other pupils are fostered well through regular encouragement to talk aloud in class, respond to questions and work together in twos. This provides them with the confidence to communicate their ideas, respond to questions and talk to adults.
- All pupils make good progress in mathematics because of good quality teaching including the provision of practical tasks. As a result several pupils in Year 11 acquire GCSEs in mathematics and a few successfully take early entry mathematics examinations. Good learning was evident in Year 8, for example, where pupils were challenged to work out the angles of a quadrilateral. Effective paired working ensured that pupils of all abilities made good progress and understood the task.
- Pupils reach individual levels of attainment by the end of Year 11 that vary widely. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs other than autistic spectrum disorders achieve well overall.
- Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders do not achieve as well as their peers in communication, language and literacy but do achieve as well as their peers in mathematics. Students eligible for additional funding including the pupil premium and the Years 7/8 catch-up funding make similar progress to their classmates as do the few from ethnic heritages and the small number who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils of all abilities benefit from college links in Year 11 and some very good vocational experiences from Year 10 onwards. For example, the school has recently started an enterprise scheme in which pupils are engaged in small projects around the school and are learning skills that lead to accreditation that will help them in their futures. Other pupils learn skills such as hairdressing and car mechanics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Progress in lessons slows when teachers do not set work at the right level to meet each student's needs and abilities. This is particularly evident in some classes where the majority of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders. At these times teachers do not make sufficient use of pupils' work plans to engage them in decision making, communication or investigation. Their

progress also slows when too little is prepared for them to do.

- Slow progress was seen where teachers did not keep pupils with autistic spectrum disorders working at a fast enough pace and focused on learning. A lack of pre-prepared tasks, ready in pupils' work-bays on a daily basis means that pupils do not always have enough to do, and learning dips. As a result, their behaviour deteriorates and they do not complete enough work in the time allowed. In a reading task, for example, a Year 10 pupil did not achieve well enough because he did not have a means to respond.
- Teaching varies too much in quality. Good teaching in subjects such as mathematics, humanities, art, physical education, food technology and vocational education was evident in pupils' work and in their positive engagement in lessons, as well as in the pace of their learning.
- In mathematics, for example, almost all pupils, including those with autistic spectrum disorders, make good progress because practical tasks that match their needs are well prepared and engage them well, extending their numeracy skills and thinking skills so that they search for answers.
- The quality of teaching of reading has improved across the school. An effective phonics (linking letters and sounds) approach has been introduced for all pupils and this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- Assessment is improving. The tracking system is used well to show pupils' progress over time. There are examples of good marking helping pupils to improve their work and encouraging them to respond. Homework for older pupils is set and there are weekly homework clubs that are well attended.
- Teaching assistants are used well on many occasions to support groups of pupils and to enable those eligible for pupil premium funding to take part fully in lessons. Catch-up sessions for pupils who fall behind promote some good improvements in pupils' achievements because of well-planned tasks. However, the impact of teaching assistants and of extra sessions is less in the case of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders because of weaknesses in the quality of teaching overall.
- Teaching is not yet good because the different needs of all the groups of pupils are not met well enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around the school. Their attitudes are positive and there is little evidence of learning being disrupted. In assembly, for example, pupils sang together with gusto, clearly enthused about the songs that they learned.
- Pupils of all abilities say they feel safe at the school and they attend regularly. Relationships in the school are typically good. Pupils understand about the different kinds of bullying but older pupils say there is no bullying at the school. They know about cyber-bullying and say staff help them to sort out any issues quickly. The majority of parents and staff rightly agree that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school. They showed this in physical education where Year 8 pupils followed instructions well, worked together successfully and showed high levels of enthusiasm for their tasks, behaving very well.
- Learning regularly promotes pupils' personal development. In humanities some Year 9 pupils were learning about 'role models' and through very good modelling and film clips were able to identify what being 'cool' was really like.
- Pupils have many opportunities to help others and to improve their school, such as looking after the environment and raising funds for charities, by holding cake sales for 'Children in Need', for example.
- Older pupils say they really like the vocational experiences that the school offers because, as one pupil said, 'it gives us a good chance of getting a job'. All but one pupil who left the school in 2013 went into employment, education or training.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The broad range of

curriculum topics and subjects and enrichment activities such as trips and visits help to widen pupils' awareness of the wider world and prepare them well for their futures.

- Behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate in class, particularly when the work set is not well enough matched to their abilities.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The senior leaders recognise that there are some weaknesses in the quality of teaching and that this affects some pupils' learning. They acknowledge that there is more to do to improve teaching so that all groups of pupils make at least the progress expected of them. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been regular, but has not been rigorous enough to generate and sustain improvement.
- In joint observations with inspectors senior leaders identified weaknesses in provision, particularly for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. They have a clear view of what now needs to be done to improve.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and provides good quality training for staff that is beginning to have a positive impact on most areas of the school.
- Leaders have begun to make use of the National Teachers' Standards to bring about improvements. There are a few examples of staff progressing up the pay scales because of training and support, which has helped them to improve their effectiveness and seek promotion.
- The extended curriculum has been effectively improved by leaders at all levels, including subject leaders, and now has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Exciting visits to places of interest, drama and productions fully engage pupils' interest. Vocational opportunities prepare older pupils well for life after school.
- Pupil premium funding and Years 7/8 Catch-up funding are used appropriately to fund additional staff and resources to support pupils' learning and help them to catch up.
- Parents are supportive of the school and are pleased with their child's progress.
- The local authority provides appropriate support to leaders in relation to placing pupils, and has reviewed the schools' evidence base but has not been involved in monitoring teaching and learning recently.
- In a number of respects leaders successfully promote equality and eliminate discrimination through their very effective policies and procedures which make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to access all the experiences on offer. However, the school acknowledges that pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are not achieving as well as they should.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- Leadership and management are not good because there has been too little focus on improving the quality of teaching and provision, particularly for pupils with autism spectrum disorders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to their roles and they receive frequent updates from the headteacher and check progress regularly. However, they have not challenged the school well enough about the achievement and progress of different groups of pupils or about the quality of teaching or the schools' data to enable them to identify areas for improvement. . They oversee performance management but have not given sufficient scrutiny to its impact on improving teaching and learning. Governors have a good range of skills and receive regular training.

They manage the finances allocated to the school well and ensure that funding allocated for pupils who are eligible for premium funding is appropriately spent on additional staff and extra resources, including information and communication technology.

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	101485
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	425477

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brad Smith
Headteacher	Audrey Chamberlain
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 January 2012
Telephone number	01322 433494
Fax number	01322 433080
Email address	achamberlain@woodside.bexley.sch.uk

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