

Sherbrook Primary School

Brunswick Road, Cannock, WS11 5SA

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | 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.

- Pupils make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. Some pupils make outstanding progress.
- Parents are strongly supportive of the school. Its work with families of children with autism is outstanding and highly valued by parents and carers.
- Pupils' safety is outstanding. They are well looked after and feel safe and secure.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Some pupils have made big strides in improvements in their behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy rich and stimulating activities and experiences. These add to their enjoyment of school and promote their personal development well.
- Governors have put in place effective transitional arrangements to ensure consistency and stability in the leadership of the school while a new headteacher is appointed.
- Teaching is typically good. Staff make learning lively through the use of practical activities and sensory methods. The use of outdoor resources is outstanding and leads to high quality learning.
- Leaders, managers and governors ensure that pupils receive good quality teaching and achieve well.
- The school provides valuable support and advice to other schools to help them become more effective in their work with pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. At times, some less-able pupils are not engaged enough in lessons and work for the more-able pupils does not stretch them enough.
- The marking of pupils' work is not consistent across the school.
- The accommodation limits the progress of some pupils, particularly those who are easily distracted.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 12 lessons, all of which were joint observations with different members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 14 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and also considered the school’s recent survey of parents’ views.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including the school’s information on pupils’ progress, its self-evaluation, development plans and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Frank Price, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Peter McKenzie | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Sherbrook educates pupils with moderate, severe and complex learning difficulties. An increasing proportion of pupils have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Most pupils are of a White British heritage.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above average. In this school, this additional funding allocated by the government is for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and who are looked after by the local authority.
- The governing body is in the process of appointing a new headteacher. An acting headteacher took up the position in January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and further raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - less-able pupils are always purposefully involved in lessons and more-able pupils have work which stretches them
 - pupils are engaged by, and remain focused on their work throughout lessons
 - the marking of pupils' work is applied more consistently so that, where appropriate, pupils know how to improve.
- Improve the accommodation so that there are areas where pupils can work quietly and achieve their individual tasks more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve outstandingly well. They acquire skills and knowledge at a rapid rate, and make exceptional gains in numeracy and developing their physical co-ordination. Children join in lessons with enthusiasm, singing counting rhymes and exchanging current buns in response to a given number.
- The progress of pupils across the rest of the school is good and reflects the good teaching they receive. Most pupils are keen to join in lessons. The staff's strongly encouraging approach promotes pupils' positive attitudes to learning in lessons, as well as creating enjoyable learning experiences.
- Pupils who receive additional funding through the pupil premium grant make equally good progress as other pupils. This is because, where there is evidence of pupils not achieving their goals, they are quickly identified and receive additional help. This has seen the rate at which some pupils achieve their goals in English, mathematics and science increase substantially.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. More-able pupils read fluently and some pupils use symbols to help them read and understand text. Where necessary, pupils use signing to help them to read. Pupils use numeracy in practical ways to help them tell the time or use money.
- Pupils' communication skills are developed well. Non-verbal pupils use symbols which they exchange for objects or desired activities.
- There are no differences in pupils' achievements due to their special educational needs, gender or ethnicity. Where differences do exist, these are related to pupils' individual levels of understanding and development.
- The primary school sport funding has increased pupils' access to a wider range of physical activities such as dance, after-school clubs and outdoor adventure activities. This has helped to promote pupils' enjoyment and more active lifestyle.
- Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils' learning. This allows learning to take place in small groups, or individually. However, the lack of space in the school means that some pupils are not able to work away from distractions; at times this disrupts their learning and that of the wider class.
- Sometimes more-able pupils are not challenged enough. For example, when writing, all pupils are expected to produce the same piece of writing rather than higher attaining pupils writing more extensively and creatively.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good across the school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is outstanding. It is vibrant, stimulating and enthusiastic. Music, singing and other adults are used exceptionally well and this generates outstanding learning opportunities for children. The classroom environment inspires children to be ambitious to learn.
- There are pockets of outstanding teaching across the rest of the school. In an English lesson,

pupils were enthralled by the story of 'Norman the snail' and this stimulated both high quality writing and verbal contributions from pupils. High expectations for spelling and grammar were set and pupils responded with eagerness.

- Outdoor learning is used superbly well to teach some lessons, such as science and mathematics. In one lesson pupils were highly motivated and worked in pairs to create two-dimensional shapes out of twigs. Through skilful questioning by staff, children were able to talk confidently about types and properties of shapes.
- The use of symbols is excellent. For example, teachers set out the aims of the lesson in writing and symbols and this increases pupils' understanding very effectively.
- Teachers and support staff have excellent knowledge of how various learning difficulties affect pupils' learning. The school has built up expertise in addressing autism to help parents and other schools manage pupils' behaviour and learning more effectively.
- Technology is used well in lessons to make teaching stimulating and interesting. Some pupils use tablet computers or communication aids to help them with their learning.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils are a strength and this gets the best out of pupils. This promotes their positive attitudes to learning. Often, behaviour is managed very sensitively by coaxing and encouraging reluctant pupils to participate in an activity and after the initial reluctance they enjoy the lesson.
- Occasionally, less-able pupils spend too much time observing rather than participating in learning. More-able pupils' progress is limited when there is too much focus on routine and not enough on extending their learning. At times, pupils who have difficulty in concentrating disengage from learning because the work does not capture their interest.
- There are some good examples of marking of pupils' work which sets out what pupils need to work on next, but this is not yet consistent across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school environment is a very safe place. Thorough risk assessments are used routinely to ensure pupils are safe in all activities undertaken, including those off-site. Pupils are confident, enjoy school and feel at ease with staff and each other.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff are very skilled and sensitive in managing pupils and enabling individuals to make good improvements in their behaviour.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, with most keen and eager to join in enthusiastically. When learning activities do not present the right level of challenge, some pupils lose concentration and get fractious. Behaviour around the school is good and lunchtimes are good social occasions where pupils learn to develop their independence and social skills.
- Bullying is rare and pupils do not feel it happens in their school. They place great trust in staff and have confidence that they will resolve any problems if they arose. Pupils are taught how to keep safe using the internet.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well across the

school. This adds a rich dimension to their experiences. They enjoy listening to and participating in African and Indian dance music, and residential trips make a lasting impact on pupils' personal development.

- There are no exclusions, and bullying and incident logs need to be rarely used. Pupils' attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership and management of the school are good. Leaders and managers have established a strong, supportive learning environment where pupils enjoy school and make good progress, both academically and in their personal development.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding with teaching, progress, behaviour and safety for these children being excellent.
- The acting headteacher has provided continuity of provision while the school has been without a substantive headteacher. The arrangements for the previous headteacher to be available to provide advice and additional help with monitoring and training work well and provide stability for the school.
- The work of teachers is closely monitored and this has ensured that teaching is of a good quality across the school. Training needs are identified so that staff keep their knowledge and skills up to date. The link between salary progression and the quality of teaching is well judged.
- The school shares its good practice with other schools, for example in teaching pupils with autism and promoting pupils' speech and language. It has supported 15 schools over the last year.
- Subject and other leaders drive forward their areas of responsibility effectively. Action plans contribute to improvements and ensure that new initiatives, such as outdoor learning and outdoor education, are evaluated for their impact on pupils' learning.
- The school offers a rich and diverse range of subjects and activities for pupils, such as music and sports after-school clubs. These make learning enjoyable and memorable for pupils. Specialist methods for teaching pupils with autism and sensory needs have been incorporated into many aspects of teaching.
- The school has strong and productive links with parents. They overwhelmingly hold the school in high esteem and feel very well supported by staff in relation to both their child's behaviour and learning.
- The local authority provides effective support. It recognises that there are many excellent aspects to the work of the school, such as its partnership working, its strong links with families and tracking of pupils' progress. The local authority has been active in conjunction with the governing body to secure funding for an extension and refurbishment of the premises.
- Additional sources of funding, such as the pupil premium grant and the primary school sport funding, have been used well to help pupils close the gap with their peers. The introduction of outdoor education activities has encouraged a wider range of experiences for pupils to enjoy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed and knowledgeable. They have undertaken a range of training, such

as safeguarding and using and understanding pupil assessment information. This has given them sufficient knowledge and skills to know how well pupils' achieve and how this compares to similar pupils nationally. Visits to lessons have been intermittent, but there is now a planned timetable of learning walks in place. They know that teaching is good and have ensured that the link with salary progression is appropriate. Governors have been instrumental in making effective strategic decisions with regard to transitional arrangements for the leadership and management of the school. They understand how additional funding has been spent and the benefits of this for pupils.

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 | 124514 |
| Local authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 431585 |

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 | 2–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 87 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Robert Heighway |
| Headteacher | Louise Blackburn (acting headteacher) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11–12 July 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01543 510216 |
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