

# The Chalet School

Liden Drive, Swindon, SN3 6EX

**Inspection dates** 1–2 April 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 Chalet School is a good school, with much to celebrate. Classrooms are bright, busy and attractive, where pupils prosper.
- It provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn in a mainstream school, which effectively promotes their social and communication skills.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle into school quickly and are well prepared for moving on to the older classes.
- A strong focus on checking and improving the quality of teaching by leaders and managers has led to improvements in teaching, such as good use of outdoor learning for pupils, which they enjoy.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have an excellent understanding of how to help and support pupils with complex needs or a diagnosis of autism.
- Pupils make good progress academically and in managing the challenges associated with their autism. One of the reasons for the good progress pupils make is because work is set at the right level.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. The identification of strengths and areas for improvement are accurate and the school is ambitious to improve further.
- The school has gained nationally recognised awards for its work on inclusion and pupils with a diagnosis of autism.
- Parents, carers and staff hold the school in high regard.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils make good improvements in their behaviour during their time at the school.
- The safety and welfare of pupils are excellent.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding across the school.
- There are few opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice.
- Signing is not yet embedded consistently in all classes.
- Modern technologies to support pupils' learning and communication skills are not as well developed as they might be.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed eight 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 from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 23 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and also considered the school's recent survey of parents' and carers' views and staff questionnaires.
- 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

Rowena Green

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Chalet School caters for pupils who have complex learning difficulties, most of whom have a diagnosis of autism.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- A large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage with the remainder being from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are six times as many boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority, is average.
- The school has gained nationally recognised accredited awards for its work in autism and inclusion.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching across the school and further raise pupils' achievement by:
  - agreeing what outstanding teaching looks like at Chalet School
  - increasing opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice in similar schools, observe each other and receive more coaching to improve their teaching
  - using signing more consistently in all classes
  - exploring further the use of modern technologies to promote pupils' learning and communication and skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve outstandingly well. The clear structured routines help children to settle well and they enjoy the wide range of stimulating activities on offer, particularly outdoor learning.
- Pupils enter the school at various times and their attainment is below that of pupils in mainstream schools. However, the majority of pupils make good progress from low starting points with some making outstanding progress.
- Pupils make good improvements in their communication skills. They learn how to use symbols, signs and photographs to help both understand and develop their verbal skills where appropriate.
- Pupils are given plentiful opportunities to make choices and this provides effective motivation for communication. For example, pupils express preferences at snack time by using alternative methods for communication, such as switches, signs and photographs. Signing has recently been introduced with pupils and this is proving particularly beneficial for some pupils.
- In English, some pupils learn how to copy their name. The most able pupils achieve well and often write out their timetable for the day. In reading, some pupils read fluently and adults check their understanding of text. Pupils recognise the sounds that letters make.
- In mathematics, pupils recognise numbers, shapes and do simple addition or subtraction sums.
- However, achievement is not outstanding, as pupils' achievements are in line with the good teaching they receive.
- Pupils are prepared well for putting skills into practice and in the school flat they learn to sort clothes, make the bed and carry out simple tasks.
- Pupils are generally keen to participate in lessons. Occasionally however, some pupils have outbursts, which at times limit their learning, but are given work in a quiet area until they are able to rejoin the class.
- Pupils' progress is good because tasks are carefully set at the right level and the effective use of additional adults ensures that pupils are well supported in their learning.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding receive speech and language support, and as a result, are now able to communicate more confidently. Specific targets have been set and most pupils have achieved these so that gaps between different groups of pupils in English and mathematics are reducing.
- Through the use of the primary sports funding, more opportunities have been provided to develop pupils' cooperation in team games, which is a concept they find difficult. As a result, pupils' enjoyment of physical education has increased through the regular use of a sports coach.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. The excellent understanding of pupils by staff is the key to unlocking pupils' potential. They know how to manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and judge effectively when a pupil may need to work individually rather than in a group for a period of time.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Activities are motivating and purposeful and children learn to follow routines and improve their behaviour through clear and high expectations of staff.
- Much of the day is based on clear routines and a structure that pupils understand through their own personal symbolised timetable. This helps to prevent frustration for pupils and makes them more receptive to learning.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure work is set at the correct level. Teachers use highly structured learning programmes or sensory approaches to engage pupils who are working at early developmental levels. Staff have a clear understanding of how autism affects pupils' learning and how this can be minimised, so that pupils are better able to communicate, interact and tolerate change more readily.

- Teachers use photographs and symbols to enable pupils to communicate more confidently. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because the use of signing is not sufficiently well established across the school. Also, while technology is used well to make teaching and learning more motivating, the use of modern technologies, such as tablets to help with pupils' communication and learning, are at the early stage of development.
- There is always a 'plan B' so that if a pupil is not able to follow some parts of a lesson an alternative activity is at hand. This ensures that pupils are purposefully engaged in learning through flexible ways of working by staff and is very effective.
- Pupils of all ages take part in outdoor learning. This is very motivating for many pupils, making learning lively and interesting for them, and helps them to put into practice skills they have learned in the classroom.
- The checking of pupils' progress and achievements is clear and teachers use this information well to pinpoint both strengths and weaknesses.

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

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school is a safe place and pupils are confident and 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' behaviour, enabling individuals to make good improvements in their behaviour during their time at the school.
- Pupils are appropriately involved in the school council, with agendas and minutes in symbol format. They have made suggestions for improvements, such as playground markings, which have proved popular, and interviewing of new staff. The council gives pupils the opportunity to express their views openly and freely and contributes to pupils feeling safe in the school.
- Some pupils have challenging behaviour and find understanding and following rules difficult initially. However, over time they become much more tolerant of change and some develop self-management techniques, whereby they may take themselves to a quiet area if they are feeling stressed, until they have calmed down. The use of 'thermometers' to gauge pupils' emotional feeling is very effective in diffusing potentially difficult situations.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. Their attitudes to learning are very positive and they show an enthusiastic appetite for school life.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because some pupils' behaviour, on occasions, limits their learning in lessons, as they have not yet developed the techniques to self-manage their outbursts.
- The majority of pupils attend well and their attendance is in line with that of mainstream primary schools. The school works closely with parents and carers to ensure that pupils attend well.
- There are no exclusions and recorded incidents of bullying and racial intolerance are rare. Where appropriate, according to pupils' individual abilities, they are taught how to keep safe online.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly. Clear routines and structure help pupils to understand their world more effectively. Pupils are regularly encouraged to make decisions and communicate their feelings. Cultural experiences through the use of music and sport add a rich dimension to pupils' enjoyment and the broadening of their opportunities.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Leadership and management at all levels, including the Early Years Foundations Stage, are good.
- The headteacher, in conjunction with senior leaders and the supportive governing body, has created a positive, warm and open culture within the school, where pupils thrive.
- The work of teachers is checked regularly and has led to improvements in the performance of individual teachers, where needed. The link between the quality of teaching, pupils' progress

and salary progression is well judged. However, leadership and management are not yet outstanding, because opportunities for coaching staff, observing each other or outstanding practice in similar schools are limited.

- Other leaders in the school are motivated to further improve their practice and are keen to implement new ways to better meet the complex and changing learning needs of pupils.
- The school shares its expertise on autism with other schools in the local authority and is developing a 'kite mark' to encourage schools to be 'autism friendly'.
- The range of subjects and experiences that pupils receive is very appropriate to their needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage will be further enhanced when classes move into the new accommodation at the beginning of the summer term. Forest schools, music and sport enrich pupils' experiences, bringing enjoyment to learning and encouraging greater interaction of pupils with other people.
- The school enjoys the support of parents, carers and staff. Links with other schools and agencies are good and are used for the benefit of pupils.
- Additional government funding has been used well to help pupils close the gap on their peers, so that all achieve equally well. The introduction of a sports coach has encouraged pupils' enjoyment of team games, and improved teachers' knowledge and confidence in developing their sports coaching skills.
- The local authority has confidence in the school and provides support as necessary.
- The school meets the requirements for safeguarding and has good systems in place to ensure that all staff and governors are aware of, and follow, statutory responsibilities.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are providing a greater level of challenge and hold the school to account effectively through regular reporting and monitoring weeks, which take place three times a year. They have a good understanding of the information about how well pupils achieve and how it compares with that for similar schools nationally. They know the strengths of the school and areas for improvement. They know that teaching is good and that staff are improving their skills and knowledge through visits. They have held the school to account when teaching has been weak to ensure that improvements are being made at a fast enough rate. They have ensured that there is a suitable link between salary progression and the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors understand the impact and benefit of additional government funding the school has received, particularly in relation to improving pupils' communication skills. They are well trained, knowledgeable and committed to the school.

## 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>	12654
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	432066

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	55
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sian Buckland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katharine Bryan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 534537
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