

Medina House School

School Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight. PO30 2HS

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	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.

- All groups of pupils make good progress during their time at Medina House School. Achievement in English, mathematics and personal development is good.
- The most-able pupils make excellent progress in reading because of the high-quality visual approaches used and the effective teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well and quickly make friends.
- Teaching is good and the teaching of reading is outstanding. Pupils' learning is most effective when individually planned tasks are set at the right level.
- Communication aids for pupils with a diagnosis of autism and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties are used well to promote speaking, ensuring that these pupils can make choices about their learning.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the care and support that the school provides for their children.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy school. This is evident in their rising attendance. Pupils feel safe and secure at school.
- The good range of subjects promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is further enriched through local visits, links with other schools and regular productions.
- The headteacher and other leaders have improved the achievement of pupils by providing high-quality training for all staff.
- Regular monitoring has been effective in identifying what is working well and what still needs to be improved.
- The governing body works effectively with leaders. Members manage the budget well and have an accurate view of the school's work. Governors make sure that pupils who receive additional funding fully benefit from it.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- In a few lessons pupils do not make the progress they should because tasks are too easy for some and too difficult for others.
- Sometimes pupils are required to take it in turns to complete tasks and this limits the amount of time they have to complete tasks and they become restless while waiting.

Information about this inspection

- The school caters for primary-age pupils with learning difficulties from across the Isle of Wight.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs for their moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. A growing number of pupils have a diagnosis of autism and a few have additional visual, hearing or multi-sensory impairments.
- There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision catering for six nursery-age pupils in their own discrete accommodation, and eight reception-age pupils who share their learning with older pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils join the school at different times, not just in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low, and there are no pupils new to speaking English. There are many more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups, including students known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The school also receives primary school sports funding for its pupils.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Lyons

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons and made a few short visits to observe pupils learning, and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and some pupils.
- The inspection team 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, the sports premium action plan and some pupils' books.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online survey (Parent View) to provide a helpful picture of parents' and carers' views of the school. Inspectors also took account of 21 questionnaires from school staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all pupils always make the best possible progress in every lesson so that their achievement improves even further by:
 - ensuring teachers plan tasks that are always set at the right level for each pupil
 - limiting the amount of time pupils' spend waiting for their turn so that they are able to complete more activities in the time allocated
 - monitoring the impact of these improvements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment when they start at Medina House is usually well below average due to their learning difficulties. Most pupils achieve well during their time at the school because of the good support and guidance that they receive.
- Pupils make at least good progress in English, mathematics and in their personal development. Those who are supported through additional government funding benefit from extra support and tasks that fully meet their needs; because of this they make similar progress to their classmates in English and mathematics.
- Just occasionally, the achievement of a few pupils dips because planned tasks are not set at the right level and pupils find them either too easy or too difficult. This is also the case when pupils are required to wait too long for their turn.
- The most-able pupils make excellent progress in reading. The innovative introduction of visual learning programmes and the very good teaching of sounds and letters enables pupils to make rapid and sustained progress in reading. As a result, a few pupils reach standards that are close to their mainstream peers in reading by Year 6.
- Other pupils enjoy listening to stories, looking at pictures, reading simple words and phrases, and/or use symbols to make and read sentences. Pupils often take their books home to share their reading with their parents and carers.
- Modern technologies play a valuable part in enabling pupils to improve their writing and investigation skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, showed that they could use a mouse or their fingers to draw recognisable houses and to find their own initial letter. Other pupils were observed using tablets to search for information or check their own answers to questions.
- Progress in mathematics is equally good. Pupils enjoy the practical problem-solving aspects of mathematics. In Years 3 and 4 for example, pupils showed good skills in doubling numbers beyond 10 in a mental mathematics session. They worked at a fast pace because they were very well challenged by the work set, making some excellent progress.
- Pupils sports skills are improving because of the additional primary sports funding which has provided extra swimming, cricket and football coaching and in particular the purchase of a 'floating net' so that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties can float in the pool.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly settle and achieve well because of the good range of activities and high levels of support provided for them.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because progress dips when tasks do not match all pupils' abilities and when pupils do not complete enough work.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching typically promotes good learning through exciting tasks which stimulate pupils to join in and find answers for themselves.
- Regular use of modern technologies supports pupils' very individual communication needs, enabling all groups to have a means of speaking, writing and responding to questions. As a result, pupils engage well in their learning.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because tasks are sometimes either too hard or too easy for some pupils because work has not been set at the right level. This is because teachers do not always use the information to plan activities based on pupils' abilities. Turn-taking occasionally also reduces the amount of work that pupils complete. As a result, not all pupils achieve as well as they should during these sessions.
- An example of very well-planned tasks that led to excellent achievement was evident in an interactive approach to recognising letter sounds and reading words. This was very successful because the tasks were set at the right level.

- Outstanding teaching of reading is partly a result of the introduction of visual approaches which mean that pupils can see pictures, symbols and words and can check the shapes of familiar words so that they quickly learn to recognise them.
- The use of communication aids, to help support pupils who find speaking difficult, has improved in the past two years. A variety of aids is now well established in all classrooms, particularly the use of symbols and signing, which ensures all groups of pupils have a means of speaking.
- The checking of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection. It is typically helpful; pupils understand the process and it helps them to know what they need to do to improve further.
- Tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school is now rigorous and regular and links with other similar schools ensure that teachers' checks on pupils' progress are accurate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and often help each other in and around the school. Their enjoyment of school is evident in their consistently good and improving attendance which is now similar to that in other special schools. There have been no exclusions over the past two years.
- Behaviour in lessons is almost always good. Pupils help to tidy their classrooms, put away their own resources and work well with their classmates. On the very few occasions in lessons where tasks are not matched closely enough to individual pupils' abilities, or when pupils have to wait too long for their turn to respond, behaviour dips because they become restless. This is why behaviour is not yet outstanding.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Individual behaviour is well monitored. Older pupils told the inspectors that they enjoy lessons, feel really safe and that there is good behaviour at the school. The most-able pupils know the importance of staying safe when using the internet and in the local community.
- Pupils in Year 6 understand what bullying is and say there is none at the school. Observations of school records showed this to be true. Pupils' good behaviour is promoted well by the wide range of appropriate activities, the different trips and relevant tasks that the school provides.
- Pupils with very challenging behaviour, including those whose behaviour is linked to their autism, benefit from appropriate management and often one-to-one support so that any disruptions or behaviour incidents are minimal.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Through a wide range of additional activities, including regular swimming, assemblies, visits to places of interest and whole-school productions, pupils have an accurate view of life outside their school.
- During the inspection for example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 were preparing for their annual 'Rock Challenge' performance at Portsmouth Guildhall alongside 12 other primary schools. Pupils showed high levels of excitement, enthusiasm, confidence and enjoyment as they practised their songs and dances.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders, staff and governors, has worked diligently to improve all aspects of the school since the last inspection. The leadership team has been strengthened so that the school's capacity to drive improvement forward has increased.
- Leaders use the national standards for teaching effectively to set targets and improve teachers' performance. There are some examples at the school of staff at all levels undertaking additional qualifications and training so that they can help pupils make even better progress. This enables staff to seek promotion and progress up the pay scales.

- Leaders have improved the way that they check teaching and the way that pupils' progress is measured, to make sure pupils make the progress expected of them. This now enables them to increase the rate of learning of any pupil falling behind. Leaders are aware that learning in a few lessons needs improving.
- Information about pupils' progress over the past two years shows that the school is closing the gaps in achievement by successfully supporting those pupils who find learning more difficult. As a result, the vast majority are on track to meet their targets.
- The school provides regular training for staff in aspects such as developing reading skills, managing behaviour and in safeguarding, so that there is consistent practice across the school.
- The local authority works effectively with the school and has been instrumental in helping the school leaders to improve provision and outcomes.
- Effective links with local schools, as well as schools in Hampshire, have helped leaders to check the accuracy of their judgements about pupils' progress.
- The range of subjects and topics taught meets pupils' needs very well. For example, additional speech or physical therapy supports the needs of any pupil who requires it, including those who are eligible for additional government funding and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- Leaders work well with parents and carers who are pleased with the school. All of the parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire said that their child enjoys school and that their children are safe.
- Through their provision, leaders successfully eliminate discrimination and promote good relationships which make sure that all pupils have equal access to the experiences on offer.
- Safeguarding procedures meet the government's current requirements.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because leaders agree that a small amount of teaching requires some improvement so that all pupils make the best possible progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is relatively new but supports the school well, providing good quality challenge to leaders. Governors have worked rigorously to receive training to help them understand information about pupils' progress and how it compares with that in similar schools. Several governors are regular visitors and through their visits and termly reports from the headteacher, members have an accurate view of what is working well and what needs improving, including a good awareness of the quality of teaching. Governors have undertaken an audit to ensure that they have the skills to benefit the school. Good management of resources means that finances are used well to benefit pupils' achievement, including the pupil premium and primary school sports funding. Governors are fully involved in managing the performance of staff through setting targets and they work to ensure that the best teachers are rewarded through promotion. Governors are rigorous about tackling underperformance.

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	118228
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	442453

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matt Atkins
Headteacher	Julie Stewart
Previous Inspection	26–27 September 2012
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