

# Wyre Forest School

Comberton Road, Kidderminster, DY10 3DX

## Inspection dates

11–12 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Calm and clear leadership and management have improved teaching, achievement and behaviour.
- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- The sixth form is good. Those in the sixth form have good study programmes to develop the skills they need for living independently and finding out about the world of work. Some achieve a good range of GCSE qualifications.
- Teachers plan interesting activities that help pupils to become involved in learning and to extend their understanding of the world.
- Behaviour is good and pupils enjoy school.
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties that make it difficult to settle in lessons are helped to control their behaviour.
- The school provides a safe environment for pupils.
- Senior leaders and those responsible for areas of the school work try hard to make all teaching as good as the best.
- The school has brought about great improvement despite staffing difficulties.
- Governors are well informed and make a good contribution to school improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always set work that supports and challenges all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Some pupils do not know how to make their work better because teachers' writing is not always easy to read.
- Pupils do not always understand their targets.
- Teachers do not all have the same expectations about behaviour.
- Pupils with extremely challenging behaviour are sent home for short periods too often.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all three sites and observed parts of 24 lessons. They carried out several learning walks to observe the engagement of pupils in their learning. All of these were seen and discussed with the acting headteacher and all members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors talked to pupils in lessons about their learning, to groups of primary and secondary-aged pupils and students in the sixth form.
- Pupils' work from each key stage was examined and primary-aged pupils were heard reading.
- A total of 15 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were examined. Additionally, the inspectors examined 103 staff questionnaires.
- Meetings were held with four representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and the governor responsible for safeguarding. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the deputy headteachers, other members of the senior management team and with teachers responsible for particular areas of the school's work.
- The inspectors looked at the school's work and evaluated documentation regarding pupils' current progress, teachers' support and training and the curriculum, development plans. They also took account of procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Kathy Hooper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rowena Green

Additional Inspector

Andrew Phipps

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a school for pupils with a wide range of disabilities and special educational needs.
- All pupils have statements of special educational needs covering moderate, severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, difficulties on the autistic spectrum and social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding (pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is much higher than average.
- A total of five pupils from Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13 pupils learn at a variety of places away from the school, including Abberley Care Farm, Norton College, and Bishops Wood.
- Pupils are predominantly White British and there is a much lower than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- An above average proportion of pupils enter and leave the school at different times throughout the year.
- The school is on three sites. There is an assessment nursery on one site. Primary pupils and those with severe, profound and multiple, and complex learning difficulties are accommodated at the Bewdley Road site. The remaining pupils are accommodated at the Comberton Road site. The school is due to move to purpose-built accommodation on another site with a mainstream primary and secondary school in April 2015. The school will have a boarding facility from September 2014.
- The deputy headteacher at the Comberton Road site is acting headteacher during the long-term illness of the permanent headteacher.

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

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - support and challenge for pupils is precisely matched to their needs, particularly those who are the most able
  - pupils can read what their teachers have written in their books
  - pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - agreeing similar levels of seriousness for behavioural incidents between staff
  - investigating more ways of dealing with extremely challenging behaviour to reduce the amount of time some pupils spend at home.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well because teachers provide activities that support their needs effectively and manage their behaviour well.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery because staff provide a range of stimulating activities. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, some children have made outstanding progress.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school and the majority make more progress than expected because they want to learn. Those pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and the school gives them extra help to catch up.
- All pupils make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Primary-aged pupils, and those of secondary age who need more support, are taught their sounds and letters to help them to read. Older pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills well in everyday contexts, such as catering for lunches ordered by staff.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, the most-able pupils understand similes and how words sometimes rhyme in poetry. They sort two- and three-dimensional shapes accurately in mathematics.
- By the end of Key Stage 3, more-able pupils write appropriately for different audiences and purposes and they use data to plot graphs. Pupils with severe learning difficulties make good progress especially in lessons where they enjoy activities, for example, using the interactive whiteboard to check their understanding of the food chain in science.
- Students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form gain a good, and growing, range of accreditation up to GCSE level. More-able pupils, including those with difficulties on the autistic spectrum, take GCSE in English, mathematics and science. Those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress because they understand that what they learn will help them in the future.
- Year on year, more students are entered for an increasing range of qualifications. In the current Year 11, a very few students are taking GCSE mathematics at the higher level. All students leaving school go into further education, training or employment.
- Year 13 students increasingly apply their learning to real-life activities. They develop a good range of personal and vocational skills in preparation for life after school.
- Some older secondary-aged pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties put simple sentences together using flash cards. They gain certificates for showing their ability to do things for themselves. No-one leaves school without nationally recognised certificates of achievement.
- The most-able pupils who learn away from school make good progress because they become more tolerant and able to control their behaviour. For some, their concentration improves sufficiently to gain examination successes.
- There is little difference in the progress in English and mathematics of pupils entitled to the pupil premium and their classmates because this funding and the Year 7 catch-up funding is well targeted.

- Primary sport funding has enabled more pupils to take part in physical activities, for example, by becoming confident in water so that they learn to swim.
- In occasional lessons, some pupils, particularly those who are more able, are not stretched to achieve as well as they might because expectations are not high enough.

### **The quality of teaching**

**is good**

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection because staff have had well-targeted training and support that helps them to meet the wide range of pupils' special educational needs.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Staff provide a good range of exciting play activities and there is a lot of talk to encourage children's communication skills.
- Pupils throughout the school learn well because teachers make activities interesting. Primary-aged pupils in Years 2 and 3 had great fun performing poems and nursery rhymes, such as 'Hickory Dickory Dock', before the whole class. Secondary-aged pupils used digital tablets to photograph their compositions when working on a topic of 'homelessness' in art. Year 7 pupils enjoyed acting as 'forensic scientists' to examine fabrics using binocular viewers.
- Good teaching in Year 13 helps students to develop positive attitudes to learning and the skills needed for life after school. There are many opportunities to develop good study skills when they revise for examinations in English, mathematics and science, and students understand how to make their work better. Teachers support students well to apply their learning in everyday situations, whilst developing useful skills for employment. For example, they have made a healthy pizza, learned how to produce a film, and critically analysed artwork.
- There is a high level of talk and other ways of communicating in lessons. Teachers and their assistants use signs and symbols and other resources to help pupils to understand, particularly in the primary school and with pupils with the most complex needs. They use a lot of questioning to make pupils think hard and to check their understanding.
- Exciting resources and equipment and stimulating activities help pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with very complex difficulties to keep their concentration. Pupils enjoy controlling technological equipment such as tablets and interactive whiteboards.
- Teachers' good understanding of pupils' needs and abilities helps them to plan appropriate lessons. Their understanding is based on regular and frequent checking of learning in lessons. Nevertheless, some pupils, particularly the more able, are not always challenged sufficiently so they do not achieve quite as well as they might.
- Those pupils who are able to do so check their own and one another's learning in some lessons in relation to pointers for success. This reinforces their understanding and provides good opportunities for pupils to help each other.
- Teaching assistants ask good questions to make pupils think hard. They are clearly directed by teachers so they know what to observe and note. As a result, they support the understanding of individual pupils and small groups well.

- Pupils' reading has improved because teachers and teaching assistants have been trained to teach special programmes. Some teaching assistants work with those falling behind, for example, by helping pupils to sound words out when reading and to become more confident with numbers.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. They are good at spotting where problems may occur in order to pre-empt and deflect them.
- Pupils do not always know how to make their work better. Although teachers mark books carefully and describe the next steps in learning in pupils' books, their writing is not always easy to read and the words are sometimes too difficult for pupils to understand.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They come to school looking smart and ready for work. There are warm relationships at all levels and pupils are keen to learn.
- Both primary and secondary-aged pupils enjoy learning and get on well with their teachers. They are anxious to contribute in lessons. Many develop good social skills when working with others. Students in the sixth form develop into responsible and thoughtful young people and have confident social skills.
- Outside lessons, pupils' behaviour is orderly. A variety of lunchtime clubs engages pupils in purposeful activities. Staff are watchful at playtimes to check everyone is safe.
- There is strong encouragement for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and contribute to improvements in the school. Some pupils have particular responsibilities for supporting their classmates where help is needed. The work of the school council and eco council has helped to improve the environment. There are school champions and prefects. Many older pupils make their own way to school and are punctual.
- Incidents of inappropriate behaviour have dropped dramatically since the previous inspection. Inspectors found little evidence of bullying and pupils report that, if this does occur, it is quickly addressed by staff.
- The school keeps very full records of behavioural incidents and these are checked very carefully. Some incidents are less serious than others, but all are recorded. There is not always similar practice across the different sites.
- Those pupils who find it difficult to settle in school are supported through art and music therapy and through personal counselling. Those who find it difficult to control their behaviour make very good progress in developing self-control.
- When pupils' behavioural difficulties are a danger to others, some pupils are not allowed to come to school for short periods. While an improved behaviour policy has led to a significant reduction in these incidents, the school recognises the need to find even more ways of dealing with challenging behaviour without sending pupils home.
- Attendance has been improved and is similar to that of other special schools, despite some persistent absences. Quick action and rewards have helped to reduce absences.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The sites are well maintained and staff are vigilant. Pupils are taught about safety when using the internet, along with other aspects of personal safety. Both pupils and their parents confirm that pupils feel safe.
- Arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by extra-curricular activities including residential experiences for all. There are good opportunities for reflection, a well-understood code of conduct, good opportunities for social development and for understanding different cultures. A recent initiative focused on the Gypsy-Roma culture.

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

- Leadership and management are strong and senior leaders make sure that all pupils are included equally well. The acting headteacher provides calm and clear direction for the staff. The leadership team checks the progress of pupils and teachers' work rigorously and regularly. Leaders competently manage a complex school over three sites, meeting the needs of pupils with a very wide range of learning difficulties.
- The good leadership of the Early Years has improved achievement for children.
- In the sixth form, good leadership has extended the range of qualifications that pupils can achieve. Careful checking of individual needs as they move through the school ensures that students in the sixth form have individually tailored programmes with a careful balance of academic, vocational and leisure activities. Some take GCSEs in English, mathematics and science as well as a range of vocational courses. There is good access to work experience.
- The senior management team has rigorous ways of improving the quality of teaching. Greater support is given to those most in need of help.
- Teachers who are in charge of areas of the school share best practice. They give clear messages to teachers and show them how to improve.
- The local authority has provided good support, for example, through staff training. The school has demonstrated an ability to sustain improvement. The progress of all pupils is thoroughly and regularly checked and teachers are held to account. Pupils' achievement and their behaviour have improved. The number of pupils who learn in places outside school has been much reduced.
- The school has had difficulties in recruiting suitable staff. It now grows its own, working with a higher education college that trains graduates.
- The curriculum is delivered through interesting topics and themes that hold pupils' attention well. Every pupil has an opportunity for residential experience as well as belonging to a variety of clubs. There is a good range of visits and visitors and work experience for older pupils.
- The school has its own careers adviser. Older pupils understand the need to gain experiences and qualifications to help them when they leave school.
- The school works closely with parents and other professionals within the local authority to secure the best experiences for each pupil. Every effort is made to make sure that each pupil has an equal chance to succeed.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well-informed and involved. Governors challenge the school well and have a good handle on how well different pupils and teachers are doing. They check the difference between the rate of progress of pupils entitled to the premium and Year 7 catch-up in comparison with other pupils. The primary sport funding has been targeted this year on extending swimming opportunities and improving the quality of physical education. As a result, more pupils are able to swim confidently and more pupils enjoy organised physical activities. Governors understand their responsibilities for rewarding good teaching and teachers do not automatically move up the pay scale unless their performance is good. Systems for safeguarding pupils are effective and staff are appropriately trained and aware. The school is well placed to continue to improve.



## 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>	135791
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442592

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
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<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>	214
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	20
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Pam Tildesley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Price (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01562 753066
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