

Highview School

Moat Farm Road, Folkestone, CT19 5DJ

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Outstanding leadership and management have resulted in rapidly improving achievement over the past three years.
- The headteacher, very ably supported by other leaders, staff and the governing body, has a highly ambitious vision for the school.
- The vast majority of pupils now achieve outstandingly well. Their progress in English, mathematics and science is excellent.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress and enjoy their activities very much.
- Pupils in Year 11 and those in the sixth form attain a wide range of qualifications which prepare them extremely well for their futures.
- Teaching is outstanding, ensuring that pupils make rapid and sustained progress in their learning.
- Excellent improvement in the use of symbols, particularly for pupils with autism, means that they can all join in with speaking and writing.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because of excellent relationships between them and staff and because of the extremely supportive environment in which all pupils thrive.
- Attendance rates are rising and are above those of mainstream secondary schools. Pupils say that they feel very safe and secure.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly pleased with their children's education.
- The rich range of learning opportunities, subjects and topics engages pupils very well, contributing to their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have improved all areas of learning, building successfully on the good outcomes from the previous inspection. Training is thorough, and close links with other schools have resulted in strong local partnerships.
- Governors have improved their skills and their monitoring roles. They now provide excellent support and challenge to leaders. They ensure that all pupils, including those who are eligible for additional government funding, achieve equally as well as other pupils.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons, most of them jointly with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a few shorter visits to check pupils' learning, and listened to some younger students reading.
- Activities were observed at the start of the school day and in the playground, and discussions were held with pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, and a local authority representative.
- 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.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 parent and carer responses to the online survey, Parent View, and also spoke to a few parents and carers by telephone. Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Penman	Additional Inspector
Dr Kanwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils from across Kent who are supported by statements of special educational needs for their learning difficulties.
- All pupils have moderate and complex learning difficulties. About 40% of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders and a few others have additional sensory, physical or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- Most students are White British. A small minority are from African, Indian or Pakistani backgrounds. A very small proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, is above average.
- Additional primary school sports funding is provided for primary-aged pupils.
- All students in Years 7 benefit from government catch-up funding.
- The school has sixth form provision for pupils in Years 12 to 14.
- Additional provision for the sixth form is based at nearby East Kent College, which provides vocational experiences such as bricklaying and catering.
- The school federated with Foxwood School, another local special school, in September 2011. The headteacher and the governing body work with both schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that tasks are always fully matched to the abilities of every pupil in each lesson.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment on entry to Highview School is usually well below that expected for their age, because of their learning difficulties.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is outstanding across the school. In both subjects pupils make excellent progress, including those with a diagnosis of autism, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with sensory or behavioural difficulties.
- The most able pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading and all groups of pupils quickly learn to match letters and sounds through the school's rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics.
- Pupils show high levels of confidence in speaking in class and share ideas. In Year 9 for example, high-quality challenge encouraged pupils to think for themselves and use their own ideas to create a short drama.
- Similarly pupils in Year 5 were encouraged to search for information about the Brazilian rainforest. High-quality learning resulted as pupils eagerly used symbols to write their findings.
- Additional funding for pupils in Year 7 is used very well to provide tablet computers to enhance pupils' research skills. This is helping many pupils, particularly those new to the school in Year 7, to enjoy learning and quickly catch up so that they begin to improve.
- Almost all pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics because of some very effective practical challenges which they enjoy.
- On the very few occasions when pupils' progress is more limited, it is a result of tasks which do not quite match each pupil's individual abilities because they are too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils' outstanding achievements in art are evident in the wonderful displays of their work in every corner of the school and in the high proportion of students acquiring GCSEs.
- Achievement in science is outstanding. From their very low starting points, all pupils in Year 11 acquired GCSEs or Entry Level qualifications in science last year.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress because of skilled support and understanding of their needs. For example, children showed that they were able to use their knowledge of letters and sounds extremely well to attempt to write words to illustrate some butterfly pictures.
- Pupils' sports skills are improving due to additional funding that has enabled the school to provide extra coaching. Pupils are developing very healthy lifestyles because they are able to take part regularly in local school sports events.
- Those in the sixth form make excellent progress on their vocational courses undertaken at Kent College, preparing them extremely well for further training and employment.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding achieve better than expected, particularly in English and mathematics. Their progress is similar to that of other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils across the school benefit from searching questions from teachers, enabling them to make better than expected progress in all areas of learning.
- Teaching has improved over time because of increased training and regular monitoring as well as very high levels of support.
- The teaching of English now typically engages pupils outstandingly well because of exciting tasks, high levels of support and the use of a wide range of technology. This promotes pupils' independence so that they are eager to complete their tasks.
- The teaching of reading is very effective because of the excellent teaching of sounds and letters and regular daily reading practice. As a result, the most able pupils can read stories fluently while others quickly learn to read words or symbols to help them enjoy books.

- The teaching of writing enables pupils to improve their ideas and skills through very effective examples. Pupils develop the confidence to share their ideas and thoughts with their classmates.
- In a mathematics lesson, Year 11 pupils were highly motivated by the World Cup and made excellent use of technology to work out the exchange rate between Brazilian and British money. Teachers plan very well to engage pupils' interest in mathematics so that they work at a suitably swift pace and make excellent gains in learning.
- In the vast majority of lessons, tasks set fully match the individual abilities of pupils enabling them all to make outstanding progress. On the rare occasions where this is not the case pupils' learning dips slightly because tasks are too hard or too easy.
- The use of resources, particularly symbols and technology, is extremely well planned for and ensures that those who find speaking and writing difficult have a means to respond.
- The marking of pupils' work is regular, accurate and typically helpful, and gives examples of how pupils can improve their skills. This is particularly evident in English and mathematics.
- Very effective use is made of teaching assistants to support the learning of lower-attaining pupils so that their achievement is as successful as that of their classmates.
- Teaching in the sixth form is very relevant to the ages of the pupils. Outstanding learning takes place both in school and at Kent College, because tasks are exciting and relevant so that pupils really value their opportunities. As a result they work hard to achieve their goals.
- Regular home-school diaries show that staff engage very well with parents and carers, promoting positive partnerships that parents and carers value highly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is outstanding. They are polite and helpful and often undertake simple jobs, such as tidying classrooms, clearing away their own dinner plates and taking responsibility for their own belongings.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Older students told the inspectors that they feel really safe. They are fully aware of the importance of staying safe while using the internet and in the community.
- Pupils assured the inspectors that there is no real bullying of any kind at the school, saying that everyone gets on well. Any teasing, they say, is quickly dealt with. Their excellent behaviour is promoted by the very positive relationships with staff and between pupils.
- Pupils enjoy school very much as shown by their high attendance, which is rising.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very well promoted by the wide range of exciting learning for all groups. As a result there have been no exclusions recently and there are fewer persistent absentees than in other special schools.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, through the regular assemblies and the very wide range of exciting activities. Pupils are fully prepared for their lives after leaving school because of their high levels of self-esteem and confidence, and the examples that staff provide.
- Pupils' personal development is exceptional as a result of their own very high expectations and because of the challenging tasks that are set for them.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has very high aspirations and leads improvement rigorously because of his determination that all the pupils should achieve the very best that they can and have positive experiences at school.
- The headteacher is very ably supported by senior leaders and governors. They have built effectively on the good performance at the previous inspection to improve further so that all

aspects of the school are now outstanding.

- The few parents and carers who spoke to inspectors, and those who responded to the inspection questionnaires, agree that their children achieve outstandingly well. 'Staff are totally committed and provide very high role models; my children are making excellent progress', commented a parent or carer.
- Leaders make very effective use of the national standards for teaching and are determined in their drive to maintain the very high quality of teachers' skills. There are many excellent examples of staff at all levels progressing up the pay scales because of high-quality training, which has helped them to improve their effectiveness, raise pupils' standards and seek promotion.
- Leaders check teaching and learning thoroughly. They have improved their capacity to do so by providing training for middle leaders so that they can help with this process. As a result all staff now have the opportunity to meet with a leader to discuss their own practice.
- The governing body is fully involved in checking provision and achievement. Leaders are fully aware of which staff deserve promotion.
- The school has a careful approach to ensuring that all staff have regular training in aspects such as managing behaviour, safeguarding and phonics, ensuring consistent practice across the school.
- The local authority provides high-quality support for the school. It regularly carries out reviews and helps leaders to identify areas that require improvement, providing advice on making judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress.
- There are some excellent links with local schools and colleges, helping to develop pupils' academic and personal skills and providing experiences that will benefit pupils in the future.
- The quality and range of subjects and topics taught and the wide range of accreditation offered provide exceptionally well for the interests and needs of all pupils.
- Leaders successfully eliminate discrimination through their very effective policies and procedures which make sure that all students have equal opportunities to take part in all the experiences on offer.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding, enabling pupils to acquire high-quality accreditation and vocational experiences that prepare them extremely well for their futures.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely supportive, providing excellent challenge to leaders. The governors have been instrumental in taking the school to its current level and are fully involved in checking teaching and behaviour and looking carefully at how well pupils are doing. They rigorously check the effectiveness of the school, so that they have a very clear view of what is working well. Governors have an excellent range of skills which they use to benefit the school and have received a wide range of appropriate training. Consistent monitoring and full involvement in evaluating the pupils' achievement mean that members know how effective the school is. Excellent management of finances means that the additional funding is used to improve the learning of those pupils for whom it is intended. It is used very well to provide additional support and resources so that these pupils' achievements and progress are at least as good as those of their classmates. Governors are rigorous about ensuring that the best teachers and staff are rewarded and they understand the use of performance management well.

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	119044
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	432060

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Hewson
Headteacher	Neil Birch
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 June 2011
Telephone number	01303 258755
Fax number	01303 251185
Email address	office@highview.kent.sch.uk

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