

Paternoster School

Watermoor Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1JS

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2014

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In this welcoming school, pupils make good progress and achieve well in a wide range of subjects and areas, so they are well prepared for each stage of their learning.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have maintained the school's strengths whilst improving the monitoring of teaching and learning and the marking of pupils' work.
- Teaching is good. Staff convey high expectations and are exceptionally skilled in managing behaviour. The school environment is well cared for and classroom displays are used effectively to help pupils learn.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and proud of their school. They feel very safe and staff and parents are highly confident about pupils' safety and well-being, owing to the school's very thorough approach.
- The highly respected headteacher, keenly supported by senior staff, conveys high expectations, ensuring they are fulfilled, so that staff are motivated to excel.
- Governors have a deep understanding of the school and are highly effective in holding it to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Questioning in lessons does not always challenge pupils to think harder, slowing progress.
- Staff do not always convey to pupils what they are expected to learn and remind them enough of this during lessons, slowing progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons and six teachers. Two lessons were observed jointly with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector heard individual pupils read.
- The school's work was observed and the inspector looked at various documents including assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, documents relating to safeguarding, records of attendance, and the school's plans for improvement.
- The 26 questionnaires returned by staff were analysed.
- There were not enough responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire) to be analysed, but the inspector examined the school's anonymous surveys of 24 parents' views, and spoke informally to parents bringing their children to school.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All school age pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils have severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties and may have other needs for extra support including autism spectrum disorder and challenging behaviour. The number of pupils with challenging behaviour has increased since the previous inspection.
- Although the school is designated for those aged two to 19 years, currently there is no sixth form, and there are no pupils aged three-years-old or below.
- The school is organised into six classes: Early Years Foundation Stage; Years 1 and 2; Years 2 and 3; Years 4, 5 and 6; Years 6, 7 and 8; and Years 9, 10 and 11.
- A smaller proportion of pupils than nationally are from minority ethnic groups.
- A below average proportion of pupils receive support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or cared for by the local authority).
- A very small number of pupils receive literacy and numeracy catch-up funding for Year 7.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teachers' and teaching assistants' questioning always challenges pupils to think harder so that they develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Make sure teachers and teaching assistants always make it clear to pupils what they are meant to learn in lessons and remind them regularly as the lesson progresses to ensure maximum progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The levels of attainment of pupils on entering school vary from year to year and are well below levels typical for their age. These remain so as pupils pass through the school because of their special educational needs.
- Through Nursery and Reception, children make good progress because lessons are well planned. A stimulating range of resources are used to encourage communication. Challenging behaviour is managed with great skill and patience. During the inspection, a lesson using soft materials to represent a hive with bees and flowers during a song captivated children and encouraged communication well. One child said, 'It made my flower laugh!'
- From their different starting points, over time, pupils make good progress and achieve well as they pass through the school. This is reflected in the school's data, observations of lessons by the inspector and the school, pupils' work and written and photographic records of what they have learned. Some individual pupils make particularly strong progress in mathematics where this subject especially captures their interest.
- Pupils acquire knowledge and develop understanding in reading, writing, communication, mathematics and a range of other subjects. This prepares them well for the next stages of their learning. Some older pupils take a range of suitable examinations which the school keeps under regular review.
- Different groups of pupils achieve well, including those with different special educational needs, boys and girls, and pupils from minority ethnic groups. This is because the school uses very detailed assessments to check progress for individual pupils and intervenes if progress is at risk of slipping behind.
- Pupils supported through additional funding make similar progress to others because provision is individually tailored to their needs. For example, individual sessions of music therapy are provided.
- Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects because the school uses well-chosen resources and well-considered methods and checks that they are effective. Throughout the school, pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute much to their progress.
- Pupils read widely and often according to their levels of attainment, using text or symbols. They participate in stories using materials that can be touched and enjoyed. One pupil told the inspector with pride, 'I am clever at reading.'

The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff ensure that the atmosphere in classrooms is welcoming and encouraging so that pupils learn confidently and effectively. Attractive displays are used to support learning, helping ensure pupils are engaged and interested.
- In the Nursery and Reception, children are well taught and progress well because carefully structured activities and the warm atmosphere encourage learning and development effectively.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. The school's observations, some made with a representative of the local authority, indicate that teaching is good overall, with examples of outstanding teaching.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively. This is helped by teachers' secure subject knowledge and their close understanding of the needs of individual pupils. For example, teachers teach and encourage communication well using language, signing, symbols and special communication devices. Particularly strong teaching using practical and motivating resources is leading to rapid progress for some individual pupils in mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of progress and behaviour. Behaviour is managed exceptionally well, contributing very strongly to pupils' excellent behaviour. Where challenging behaviour

occurs, all staff manage this calmly and with great skill so that lessons quickly continue.

- Planning is detailed and thorough, including for one-to-one work. This helps to ensure that activities are pitched at the right level for the pupils, who often have very diverse starting points for their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants assess learning and record progress regularly. They work closely together as team members; teaching assistants make a strong contribution. For pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the smallest response is encouraged and noted, allowing progress to be recognised and celebrated.
- All pupils have suggestions for homework in their individual education plans, for example in reading or mathematics by arrangement with parents.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning to help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding, but the school recognises that the quality is inconsistent. Sometimes questioning does not challenge pupils enough to make them think about their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants explain to pupils what they will be learning and remind them at various points throughout the lesson. However, this practice too is inconsistent. Where prompts are infrequent, pupils do not keep in mind what they are learning. Both of these aspects slow progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very proud to be members of the school. They are keen to learn and try their best. They take considerable care with their work and participate as fully as they can in activities. Their attitudes to learning are highly positive because they appreciate school so much.
- Parents and staff are very confident about the high quality of the behaviour of pupils.
- Behaviour in lessons, at break times, at mealtimes and around school is excellent. Where behaviour is challenging, staff deal with this quickly. Behaviour improves very strongly over time.
- Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and are difficult to interrupt when asked to list things they like about their lessons. 'I would like to do more science – mixing things,' stated one pupil.
- Pupils attend regularly because the school works very closely with parents to maximise their attendance. Where attendance for individual pupils is not as high as for others, this is predominantly for medical reasons. For example, a pupil might be in hospital.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school's arrangements for safeguarding fully meet current government requirements. Health and well-being are highly prioritised. Staff, parents and pupils are very confident that pupils are safe in school.
- Depending on their age and levels of understanding, pupils recognise what bullying is. They mention very occasional name calling when someone is upset. Otherwise they say they do not know of any bullying in the school. Pupils state that if they were bullied they would tell a member of staff who would deal with it.
- Pupils, according to age and understanding, can give examples of how to keep safe by water and when near or crossing roads. They know they should 'look and listen, especially on a bend'. To keep safe near trains they know they must 'keep behind the yellow line'. Some older pupils know about keeping safe when using the internet, for example by not using social networking sites if they do not know the person with whom they are communicating.
- Pupils feel very secure and cannot think of any places or times when they are not safe in school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders' and managers' high ambitions for the school are conveyed unequivocally to staff, who respond fully. The expanded senior management team works together very closely, speeding up improvements.
- Self-evaluation is accurate because senior staff have a deep understanding of the school through

highly developed monitoring. For example, behaviour is meticulously recorded and analysed so that knowledge of patterns of challenging behaviour leads to practical steps to minimise it.

- Since the previous inspection, governance has improved. The effectiveness of staff with special responsibilities who are not senior managers is better because their roles are clearer. Achievement and teaching, although not yet outstanding, are improving. This demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.
- Study programmes are continually adjusted to ensure they meet pupils' needs, promoting their keenness to learn, and especially encouraging their excellent behaviour and feelings of safety. The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Highly focused professional development opportunities enable staff to develop areas of expertise, enhancing the school's work.
- Parents value the school greatly, reflecting the school's very strong parent support work. A parent commented that the school provided 'very good information on progress'. Another stated, 'Any problems, you can see someone straight away.'
- The performance of staff is managed with great conscientiousness. This contributes to teaching being consistently good and improving, for example in relation to marking and annotating pupils' work.
- Strong links with other schools include supporting pupils through joint activities. Close partnerships with services such as health help to ensure pupils are fully supported.
- Sports funding is used very effectively, for example to arrange competitions, pay for a tennis coach, and buy extra equipment. Pupils have improved their participation in competitions and value sporting activities highly. Additional literacy and numeracy funding for Year 7 pupils is effectively used. For example, the school has purchased a computer and specific resources for teaching reading and writing using the sounds letters make.
- The local authority has an accurate picture of the school's performance and provides effective support through annual visits and participating in joint lesson observations.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide strong support and rigorous challenge. Through focused visits to the school and through reports from staff, governors have a clear picture of achievement and of the quality of teaching and assessment. Governors take scrupulous care to ensure that pupils are safe. They attentively oversee the use of resources and are fully aware of the use and impact of additional funding. They make sure sports funding is well spent and its effect monitored. Governors conscientiously manage the performance of the headteacher, drawing on external advice. They ensure that the performance management of other staff rigorously links pay to performance. They regularly review the effectiveness of their work holding an annual review day and ensure their training is up to date.

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	115824
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	431581

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Arnold
Headteacher	Julie Mantell
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2011
Telephone number	01285652480
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