

Brook Green Centre for Learning

Bodmin Road, Whiteleigh, Plymouth, PL5 4DZ

Inspection dates 8–9 July 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.

- This is a school where pupils have a passion for learning. They are very keen to show their work to visitors and talk impressively about what they have learned and achieved.
- The accommodation is superb and enhances the teaching and learning environment. Pupils treat it with respect. It is tidy, well maintained and pupils are smartly dressed in their uniforms, all combining to set high expectations of teaching, learning and behaviour.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their views of school. Staff are proud to work at the school.
- Pupils make outstanding progress because their needs are carefully met and their learning is extended well. Pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- The school is calm and purposeful. A busy buzz permeates the school. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is superb. They are polite and are fantastic ambassadors for the school.
- Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major factor in promoting pupils' outstanding behaviour.
- Teaching is typically outstanding. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning is first class. Each pupil has their own laptop, for which they are responsible. These are used routinely by them in lessons to encourage them to research topics and find out information.
- The school provides a wide variety of opportunities to bring interest and richness to pupils' experiences. These range from looking after the school's animals to outdoor activities and celebrating the value of all individuals.
- Senior leaders and governors have built upon the already strong foundations of the school and brought about further improvements in teaching, pupils' progress and the school's overall effectiveness.
- The school makes excellent use of a range of therapies to give pupils every chance to thrive.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 14 lessons, most 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 of the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of 36 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and also considered the school's recent survey of parents' and carers' views. Twenty six staff responses to a questionnaire were also taken into account.
- 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

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brook Green Centre for Learning educates pupils with moderate learning difficulties and associated behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. A few have speech and language communication needs.
- There are twice as many boys than girls. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to pupils who are looked after.
- Twenty pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding.
- The school has achieved awards in healthy eating, celebrating respect and diversity and in the use of ICT.
- The school uses City College Plymouth and Cornwall College in Saltash to provide some vocational courses for Key Stage 4 pupils.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2013 and the deputy headteacher took up post in November 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' achievement in mathematics by implementing a systematic numeracy support programme.
- In conjunction with the local authority, explore the options for providing a sixth form.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The vast majority of pupils achieve outstandingly well. By the time they leave school pupils gain a suitable range of nationally recognised qualifications in line with their abilities. A few more-able pupils gain higher GCSE grades in English and mathematics and there has been a rise in the numbers of pupils gaining five A* to G grades.
- Pupils' progress in literacy is outstanding. There are regular tutorial sessions that encourage these skills on a daily basis. More-able pupils read a range of texts for pleasure and confidently attack unfamiliar words through methods they have been taught. They write extended pieces of work and write for a range of different purposes, such as how to compose a letter of complaint. Less-able pupils work on letter recognition. Through carefully targeted support, most pupils make outstanding progress.
- Progress in mathematics is good rather than outstanding because it has not benefited to the same extent from the same systematic support, although there are plans to implement this. In mathematics lessons, pupils learn how to work out proportions and fractions. They regularly practise their times tables, usually on computer programs, and they become quicker and more confident in mental mathematics.
- Pupils are well prepared for life after school through work related learning and college placements. Pupils have work-experience opportunities with the army, fire service and local businesses. When pupils leave school, all go onto further education at local colleges.
- Careful and systematic checking of pupils' progress ensures that all pupils achieve as well as they should, regardless of their special educational needs, background or gender. In some subjects in some year groups girls outperform boys, but if identified, programmes are put in place to speed up the progress of those pupils needing extra support.
- Pupils' extremely positive attitudes and eagerness for learning have a significant impact on their progress, as they are keen to do as well as possible and concentrate for sustained periods of time in lessons.
- The school meets the needs of vulnerable and challenging pupils very effectively through additional staffing and flexible ways of working, resulting in improvements to behaviour and academic progress.
- Generally the school does not enter pupils early for examinations, but where appropriate to individual need this has been done and has allowed one pupil to gain a higher-level GCSE.
- Additional funding for pupils has been spent on a wide range of appropriate activities, such as providing additional support for pupils in numeracy and literacy, providing counselling to improve pupils' behaviour and enabling pupils to participate in both after-school and outdoor activities. These have had positive benefits on pupils' behaviour, personal and social improvements.
- Funding identified to help Year 7 pupils to catch up has been used well to provide individual support to pupils in numeracy and literacy and has helped to improve their progress.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- High expectations and challenge lead to outstanding teaching and learning. Pupils respond well to these demands, as they are encouraged and enabled to achieve their best in surroundings in which they feel confident.
- Pupils use ICT resources, such as laptops, very effectively to help them learn on their own, but they know they can seek help when needed. They are confident users of technology and use this sensibly and safely.
- Sparkling teaching captures pupils' interests. In a personal, social and health education lesson, a home-made video clip was used to illustrate why humans have hair. This was done with humour and gained excellent verbal contributions and discussions between pupils.
- Excellent subject expertise is used with enthusiasm. In a physical education lesson, pupils were

able to identify ways of improving their running technique through the use of video so that they could see what changes they needed to make to make them faster runners.

- Teaching fosters pupils' independence and life skills well. In a food technology lesson for example, pupils worked in pairs to chop and grate ingredients to make a pasta bake. They were aware of safety issues and worked sensibly together.
- Teaching is characterised by high levels of engagement by pupils, who work and concentrate hard. Practical or hands-on tasks have pupils enthralled.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding. Together with the evident enthusiasm of staff and pupils, this does much to get the best out of pupils.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning. They are quick to spot when a pupil is struggling, particularly with emotional difficulties, and provide calm and sensitive help so that pupils can return to lessons quickly, so little learning time is lost.
- The outstanding accommodation provides flexible and conducive work spaces for groups and individual pupils which enable them to learn extremely well.
- Planning of lessons and the use of assessment information have improved since the last inspection. Planning is clear and consistent and assessment information is used to pinpoint pupils' progress and address potential problems quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are considerate and mature young people. They are polite and enjoy talking to visitors. The behaviour of those who have particular difficulties improves well over time through sensitive support and management.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is a credit to the school. Corridors are peaceful and pupils look after the building and their equipment with respect. There is no graffiti or litter.
- The inclusion unit manages the behaviour of pupils who face some particular challenges. This is highly effective in dealing with issues, often which have arisen outside of school. Pupils are sorted out quickly and returned to class so that minimal learning time is lost.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school ensures that pupils are safe and secure. The school environment is a safe place and thorough risk assessments are used routinely to ensure pupils are safe in all activities undertaken, including those off site. Procedures are established to ensure online internet safety.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to their learning. They have a real zest for learning and enjoy school a great deal and this contributes to their excellent progress.
- Pupils' attendance has improved substantially so that it is now above average. The school employs a parent support advisor, which has helped to improve pupils' attendance.
- There is a very strong emphasis on equality irrespective of background, gender, race or sexual orientation. The school has achieved an award from Stonewall for its work in this area. Pupils are tolerant of differences, and bullying, usually in the form of name calling, is rare.
- The school council is an active body and has made suggestions for the introduction of a uniform and activities. They enjoy raising money for charitable causes.
- There are no permanent exclusions. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is low and reducing.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is promoted excellently through thematic days and through subjects such as art, music, drama, history and geography. Pupils have 'collapsed timetable' days when they discuss deeper aspects such as life after death and moral issues. In one of these lessons, a pupil posed the question, 'Can you be too good?' which led to further discussions.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The new senior leadership team has sensibly built on much existing good and outstanding practice. Leaders have brought about a sharper focus on improving numeracy and literacy, improved use of assessment information by teachers and ensured that the school is focused on the needs of all pupils. They have the confidence of staff and parents and carers. An exceptionally strong culture to promote pupils' learning has been established, which staff and pupils support. This is evident from the high-quality display of pupils' work and the ingrained excellent working habits so that little time is lost and progress is maximised.
- The school wants to be even better. Leaders, governors and parents and carers are keen to establish a sixth form provision to provide further opportunities for pupils to develop.
- Other leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They use assessment information effectively to check the progress of pupils in their subjects and have a clear view of strengths and areas for improvements. They lead with passion and are focused on improving outcomes for their pupils.
- The work of teachers is closely checked, with advice and support available to help further improvements. There is an appropriate link between the quality of teaching and salary progression of staff.
- The subjects and experiences available for pupils are excellent. They promote outstanding achievement, academically and in their personal and social development. They provide rich and interesting opportunities for pupils to reflect on deeper issues and promote their self-esteem effectively.
- Additional sources of funding, such as the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up money, have been used well to help speed up the progress of those pupils who may be struggling, and as a result they perform at broadly similar levels to their peers'. It has increased pupils' participation in a range of outdoor activities, boosting their self-confidence.
- The local authority provides good support for the school through termly visits and carries out an annual health check of the school. It has full confidence in the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective. Governors receive good training and the right level of information to help them have a clear understanding of how well pupils are progressing. This has allowed them to ask searching questions and to check the progress of different groups of pupils. They carry out visits and also have twice yearly governor days where they visit, meet pupils and receive presentations on aspects of the school's work. They are well informed and have a good overview of the strengths and areas for improvement. They have been active in making important decisions over appointing the new senior leadership team. They understand how additional funding has been spent and what impact it has had on specific groups of pupils. They recognise that teaching has continued to improve. They have received training on numeracy, literacy, safeguarding and finance. There is a suitable link between the quality of teaching and salary progression of staff.

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	113648
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	401381

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Thomas
Headteacher	Sara Jordan
Date of previous school inspection	30 June–1 July 2010
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