

# Ravensbourne School

Neave Crescent, Faringdon Avenue, Romford, RM3 8HN

**Inspection dates** 15–16 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Not all groups of pupils in all departments of the school achieve well. Some do not have enough opportunities to develop a wide range of communication skills quickly enough.
- Teaching is inconsistent across the school. In some classes expectations of what pupils can achieve are low. Work is not planned well enough to show the small steps of progress that pupils make.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students repeat tasks too often. Activities are not well designed to improve students' progress and independence.
- In the past governors have not always held the school to account for improving pupils' achievement.
- Recent changes to the way the governing body works have not had time to show their impact. Leaders and managers have made recent changes to the checks made on pupils' progress. They are raising expectations by setting more challenging targets for pupils and teachers. This work has not yet had time to speed up the progress pupils make.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils make better progress in some classes where teachers plan activities that enable pupils to build on what they already know.
- Staff are dedicated and relationships are strong so that pupils grow in confidence. Their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in school and lessons is good. They enjoy school, feel safe and are keen to learn.
- Parents and carers appreciate the work of the school and the care that it gives to their children. They particularly appreciate the progress their children make with physical skills and feeding.
- Pupils' physical and medical needs are met well by staff. They know pupils well and understand all the factors that affect their well-being and behaviour.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 15 classes. Four of these were jointly observed with the headteacher alongside reviews of evidence of pupils' progress in lessons. In addition, short visits were made to classrooms.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, department leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and seven other governors, the liaison teacher who works with families, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to take note of. They took account of a recent questionnaire undertaken by the school. The 16 responses to the staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- The team looked at school documents, including school information relating to checks on pupils' progress, planning for school improvement, records of checks on teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of the governing body and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Joanna Jones

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a special school for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils have complex medical disorders, including autistic spectrum conditions and challenging behaviour. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after, is above average. No pupils are eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding.
- The proportion of pupils who enter and leave the school at times other than would normally be expected is above average.
- The school is organised into an early years department for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, classes for Key Stages 2 to 4 and a further education department for a few students in Year 11 and the sixth form.
- There is an after-school club on the school site which is run in association with the school for 2 days each week for 50 weeks of the year. It is subject to separate inspection.

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

- Improve teaching and achievement so that a greater proportion is good and outstanding by making sure that:
  - activities are designed well so that the small steps of progress that pupils make can be checked
  - teaching assistants are always deployed to promote learning in lessons
  - all parts of the school day are organised to promote learning at all times
  - there are high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all classes and departments of the school
  - work for sixth form students brings about the best possible progress.
- Improve leadership and management including governance by making sure that:
  - senior and middle leadership roles are clearly defined and focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in all departments of the school
  - teaching assistants and midday support staff are trained well and promote individual pupils' learning at all times.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to see how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Some groups of pupils within the school, particularly in Key Stage 2 and the sixth form, do not make good enough progress, especially in communication. They do not have enough opportunities to build on the skills they have already learnt and respond to questions. They do not always do well because they are given too few opportunities to do things for themselves.
- Some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties do not make good progress. They have not been helped sufficiently to respond to different sensory stimuli on their own.
- There are examples of better progress for individual pupils. When pupils use information and communication technology equipment to enable them to communicate effectively, they demonstrate good skills in using these resources and their progress increases. This is at an early stage of development and involves too few pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in physical development. Parents and carers say that they are pleased with pupils' progress in walking and feeding, particularly in the case of those children that were not previously able to achieve these goals.
- Pupils make good gains in social skills. They learn to appreciate each other's achievements, communicate with each other and be part of a strong community. When pupils arrive at the school they settle quickly and begin to make progress.
- Children in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 make good progress in all areas of development. For example, they use electronic communication aids to construct sentences and decide for themselves whether they want to join in games.
- There is no gap between the achievement of pupils eligible for additional funding or those from minority ethnic groups and their peers. More-able pupils at the school achieve well and some move on to mainstream schools or further education placements at colleges.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teachers in some classes in the school do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Activities are not designed well enough to promote learning through all senses. They do not demonstrate the small steps in progress that pupils can make, particularly those with profound and multiple difficulties.
- Teaching assistants in some classes are not always clearly focused on promoting pupils' learning.
- Planned activities do not always clearly focus on what the individual pupils are expected to learn. When they are not planned well enough to encourage pupils to complete tasks on their own, teaching assistants give pupils too much help.
- When some sessions during the school day are not considered as learning opportunities, not all staff involved contribute fully or are aware of the progress that pupils could be making.
- Checks on the pupils' progress are regular. The systems for collecting this information from all staff and therapists involved at the school do not always enable teachers to identify where pupils could be making more rapid progress. Teaching in the further education department does not always enable students to be as independent as possible. Activities are not designed well enough to enable them to develop the wide range of skills that they need to succeed in the next stage of education or training.
- New systems for checking the progress of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were introduced across the school in September 2013. This is enabling the small steps of progress these pupils make to be measured. It has not been in place long enough to show improving progress for a sustained period of time.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good. Staff, including higher-level teaching assistants, are trained well and deployed to provide well-planned activities that enable pupils to make good progress.

- In some classes there is a strong partnership between the teacher and teaching assistants and pupils learn well. They learn to communicate well with each other and with adults. For example, they make requests for the apparatus they need and comment on what other pupils are achieving.
- Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics and have opportunities to learn basic counting, use these skills for shopping and feel and understand shapes.
- Music therapy sessions are used well to develop pupils' experience of performance and their cultural development. They enjoy the activities which also promote their developing communication and social skills.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Several commented that they enjoy school and many show that they enjoy learning.
- There is no evidence of bullying because pupils have positive working relationships with each other and there is mutual respect between all members of the school community. Pupils' moral development is good because they understand right and wrong and how to behave well.
- The good system for managing pupils' behaviour is understood well by pupils. It is used successfully for those whose communication, social and anxiety difficulties make it much more of a challenge for them to manage their own behaviour.
- The school works well with the families of children who are persistently absent. Attendance is improving but it is not yet in line with the national average compared with similar schools. Pupils with complex medical needs are absent because of hospital appointments that are at some distance.
- Equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are fundamental to the work of the school. There are good working relationships at all levels, resulting in a cohesive community that provides good care for all pupils.
- The school council contributes to the work of the school and helps to decide how to run school events, for example the leavers' assembly and end of term celebrations. All pupils who want to participate are encouraged to attend so that all can help with decision making. Pupils are able to contribute to discussions through electronic aids, their voices and signing. Pupils feel safe at school. They know that all the adults keep them safe and secure.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff are trained well to lift and move pupils and administer feeds. Risk is managed well. The staff have a good knowledge of the pupils and of the factors that affect their well-being and behaviour. Staff meet pupils' physical and medical needs well.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- The school has only recently set sufficiently challenging targets for pupils' progress using national guidance and begun to hold teachers responsible for raising achievement against these. There has not been enough time for the new system to show sustained improvements in progress for all groups of pupils, especially in communication, English and mathematics.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching across the school and is aware of inconsistencies and individual good teaching. Actions to improve teaching, particularly through the training and managing performance of teaching assistants and midday support staff, are at an early stage. Not all department leaders have enough opportunities to check the quality of teaching in their areas for themselves.
- Teachers' performance is managed well and measured against the national Teachers' Standards. Teachers are rewarded appropriately for their performance in the classroom and contribution to

the leadership of the school. Underperformance has been tackled successfully.

- The range of subjects taught promotes pupils' social, spiritual and physical development well. It is underdeveloped in improving communication skills for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in some parts of the school.
- The local authority realises that there needs to be a sharper focus on teaching and learning and the quality of pupils' progress at the school. It provides a school improvement partner to review the work of the school. It also provides support for governors to manage the performance of the headteacher well.
- Despite the school's efforts, the organisation of local authority and health care trust services does not enable good collaboration between them for the benefit of pupils and their families. The school and parents and carers say that it requires persistence to obtain equipment and services that the pupils are entitled to.
- Some parts of the premises are not fit for purpose, for example access to the swimming pool is restricted and evacuation procedures from that area are complex, but there is no risk to pupils' safety. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
- Leaders and managers have demonstrated the capacity to make improvements. They have made changes to grouping and teaching arrangements that have secured good progress in the early years department. They have implemented new procedures for checking the small steps of progress made by pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and this is beginning to show that progress is improving.
- Additional funding is used effectively to work with families to improve attendance and to provide extended learning activities after school that make sure that there is no gap in achievement.
- Primary school sports funding is used for staff training to deliver additional therapeutic movement programmes. This promotes further the pupils' physical development and the range of activities they participate in.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the work of the school. They receive daily reports about what their children have been doing at school. There are opportunities to meet with teachers and be involved in setting targets for their children at annual review meetings.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have recently reviewed their structure and procedures in order to enable them to make planning decisions more quickly and to check the school's work more thoroughly. The new arrangements have not yet had time to show an impact on the accuracy of the school's evaluation of its own work or on the quality of its improvement planning. An external review of governance is necessary to support governors in this process.
  - Governors have managed the performance of the headteacher effectively. They receive regular reports from the headteacher about the quality of teaching, salaries and pupils' progress. Pupils' progress has only recently been checked against current national progression guidance for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Governors have made sure that they have a good range of skills to fulfil their responsibilities. They have taken strategic decisions to change the administration of the school to make sure that the headteacher can focus on the key task of improving teaching and achievement. Governors know that additional funding has been spent to improve the attendance of those who are persistently absent and provide clubs and opportunities that continue to promote learning after school.

## 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>	102364
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	425482

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	86
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Wayne Chretien
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Cameron
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 341800
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