

# The Edith Borthwick School

Fennes Road, Church Street, Braintree, CM7 5LA

**Inspection dates** 18–19 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Good leadership and management have sustained high quality teaching and pupils' good achievement since the last inspection. The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong direction for school improvement and receive good support from governors.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, reflected in their good attendance and engagement in activities. The school's efforts to ensure pupils are safe are good.
- Good teaching, with some outstanding examples, has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress they make over time.
- Teachers make good use of resources, visual timetables, symbols and signs to ensure that pupils with different learning needs access learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in supporting the learning of different pupils. They have excellent relationship with pupils and consistently manage their behaviour well.
- Pupils' achievement is good. They make outstanding progress in personal, social, and health education. Pupils make good progress in communication, reading, numeracy and computing, with some making outstanding progress. The oldest pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Good teaching and well-planned learning opportunities in the Early Years enables children to settle in quickly to their routines, stay safe and make good progress.
- Good provision in the sixth form, as a result of good leadership, has led to good learning and progress of students. They develop good independence skills and are consequently well prepared for life after school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few pockets of teaching require improvement and not enough is outstanding.
- Occasionally, pupils are not making as much progress in writing as they are in other subjects.
- The thinking and skills of more-able pupils is not always extended sufficiently, especially in writing.
- There are missed opportunities to promote writing and pupils are not always informed how to improve their writing.
- The school is at a very early stage of developing and implementing new arrangements for the curriculum and assessment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors looked at learning and the impact of teaching over time in 18 lessons and observed most teachers. Ten of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors heard a few pupils read and looked at pupils' work across the school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers with leadership responsibilities, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative and different groups of pupils. Informal discussions also took place with a few pupils at break time and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at 22 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents) including one comment. They also took account of 75 responses to the school's most recent questionnaire and looked at 118 questionnaires returned from staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including safeguarding policies, the school development plan, the summary self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings, records of behaviour, attendance figures, and information about children's progress in the Early Years and pupils' progress over time and the destinations of students on leaving the sixth form.

## Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Terence Cook	Additional Inspector
Aileen Thomas	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Edith Borthwick School caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs arising from complex and severe learning disabilities and difficulties, including pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- All but a few children in the Early Years, who are undergoing statutory assessment, have a statement of special educational needs. Just over half of these statements are for autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Nearly all pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above average. This is additional funding for pupils entitled to free school meals who are looked after by the local authority or from where one member of their family is serving in the armed forces. The proportion of children in the school who are looked after by the local authority has increased by 50% since the last inspection.
- No pupils attend alternative provision for part of their education.
- Since the last inspection, the school is no longer federated with a local school but is now part of the Essex Special School Educational Trust with other Essex special schools. The school roll has risen, the leadership team has been extended, and the school purchases its own speech and language services.

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

- Eliminate the few remaining weaknesses in teaching, increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise achievement in writing by making sure that:
  - the thinking of more-able pupils is always extended, particularly in writing at Key Stage 4
  - pupils have more opportunities for writing and are always informed of how to improve their written work
  - teachers with leadership responsibilities work with senior leaders to develop and implement new arrangements for the curriculum and assessment by September 2015.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is providing clear direction for the school and receives very good support from his senior leaders in driving improvement forwards. Together, they have ensured that staff are committed to improving teaching and learning, and to raising pupils' achievement. This has led to a strong culture in which pupils want to do well, and where good behaviour and attitudes to learning flourish. The school has good support from parents, and this is reflected in both its own surveys and in Parent View responses.
- The arrangements for managing the performance of teachers are rigorous. They are securely based on the national teaching standards, and good practice is clearly linked to increases in salary. Monitoring and support for teaching are good. Lesson observations are regular; strengths and areas for improvement are clearly identified and fed back to teachers. Where any underperformance is identified, effective support and mentoring is put in place. This has led to a reduction in the proportion of teaching requiring improvement and an increase in good or better teaching since the last inspection.
- Teachers with leadership responsibilities are currently reviewing their work and starting to develop new arrangements for the curriculum and assessment. They aim to have new arrangements fully in place by September 2015 when the school moves to its new premises.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the learning needs of pupils. There is sharp focus on developing the basic skills of communication, literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional development from the Early Years to post-16. Pupils at Key Stages 1 to 3 follow topics based on six areas of learning. The school is working to provide a range of broader experiences at Key Stage 3 to prepare pupils for transition. Students at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are following an effective programme of relevant courses, independence skills and work-related learning, including good careers education. This is enabling them to make informed choices about their futures and leading to successful transition to further education when they leave.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its recently revised scheme of work. For example, in the wide range of residential experiences pupils often experience a sense of wonder and develop good team and leadership skills. Opportunities for pupils to learn about life in modern Britain are developing well through the programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils are learning to respect people from different backgrounds, religions and cultures through, for example, their experience in school of Indian Day, Chinese Day, a trip to France and participation in a Caribbean steel band. They also develop a sense of right from wrong and learn to take turns, share and work together.
- Leaders have made good use of primary school physical education and sport premium to enhance pupils' fitness and develop their participation in physical activity. Staff have benefited from working alongside sports coaches, and there has been increased participation by pupils in competitive sports and in lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils with more complex needs, such as profound and multiple learning difficulties, have increased their enjoyment and confidence in sport.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional speech and language support which has led to improved communication. It has also been used to provide more technology, which has led to improvement in pupils' use of new technologies such as tablet computers. Its use to provide additional individual support for literacy and numeracy has had a good impact on the achievement of this group of pupils.
- The local authority is providing good challenge and support for the staff through regular visits and reviews.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have carried out a review of their work and developed a clear plan of action to improve their strategic oversight of the school. This has led to governors taking key responsibility through focused visits for overseeing aspects of the school development plan, focusing on the school's context, pupils'

achievement, the quality of teaching, behaviour and safety and leadership and management. As a result, governors have a secure view of the quality of teaching. They use the information provided for them about pupils' progress to influence school improvement priorities and in managing the performance of the headteacher.

- Governors are ensuring that the staff are promoting respect and tolerance of different faiths, lifestyles and cultures through their recent review of the schemes of work for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and personal, social and health education. They are holding the school to account for its spending on pupil premium and primary physical education and sport premium funding. They ensure that the school is meeting safeguarding requirements. Two governors are trained in safer recruitment and the nominated safeguarding governor regularly visits the school to check that records and procedures for vetting and staff training are up to date.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There have been no permanent exclusions for many years and fixed-term exclusions are very rare. Pupils respond positively to the consistently good management of their behaviour by staff, who use the systems of rewards and sanctions well and provide excellent role models for good behaviour. As a result, low level disruption is rare and those pupils exhibiting more challenging behaviours make significant improvements in self-control over time. The good behaviour of pupils is impacting well on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as seen in their growing confidence and self-esteem. Good behaviour of pupils was confirmed by most parents and staff who returned their questionnaires and in discussion with pupils. Pupils are developing their understanding of why it is important to be well behaved in school, at home and outside school.
- Pupils are kind towards one another; they take turns and listen carefully to each other's views. They show courtesy and respect towards staff and visitors. Pupils say that bullying does not occur very often and that when it does, staff deal with it quickly. They are developing their understanding of different types of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying. They also have a growing awareness of how to recognise extremist views and feel confident to go to a member of staff if they are anxious about this.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They take a pride in their work, listen attentively in lessons, follow instructions and do their best to complete their tasks. Their work is well presented, neat and tidy. They read enthusiastically in school and at home. Their good attitudes to all that the school offers are reflected in their good attendance and punctuality.
- The school has developed and implemented very effective systems for monitoring and promoting good attendance. In the event of absence, there is immediate contact with home by the school and close monitoring by the safeguarding manager.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Incident logs show that the school deals effectively with derogatory language and discrimination of any kind, which hardly ever occurs. Pupils abide by safety rules when playing team games, and play safely at break times and lunchtimes. They use the computers safely and know the potential risks of using social networking sites. Pupils move around the school and handle practical equipment, such as tools and kitchen utensils, safely. The oldest pupils and sixth form students learn how to travel independently and safely. Good procedures are in place to check the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils learn effectively and make good progress because teaching over time is good. Pupils' written work, learning seen in lessons and the school's information about pupils' progress confirms that teaching is good, with some examples of outstanding teaching evident. Teachers usually have high expectations for learning so that pupils nearly always focus on their learning, listen to staff and follow their instructions. Their good attitudes to learning impact positively on their progress. Governors, staff, parents, and pupils believe that teaching is good.

- Annotated photographs of pupils' learning journeys and visits to lessons demonstrated that teachers make good use of resources, visual timetables, symbols and signs to ensure pupils with different learning needs access learning. For example, in Key Stage 3 pupils of different abilities used analogue and digital clocks to tell the time. Less-able pupils used a large analogue clock to tell the time to the hour, while more-able pupils used digital clocks to accurately record 24-hour time in hours and minutes.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in supporting the learning of different pupils. In all lessons seen, teachers and teaching assistants maintained excellent relationship with pupils and consistently managed their behaviour well. For example, in a Key Stage 2 physical education lesson pupils warmed up by moving quickly to the song 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes' and then looked at the movement of a witch flying on a broomstick as the teacher carefully explained how pupils should move over and under hurdles in the gym. Teaching assistants worked well in supporting the movement of pupils with more complex needs and challenging the more-able pupils to move faster. Through encouragement praise and positive behaviour management, all staff ensured that pupils remained focused and engaged in learning.
- Good support for the learning of vulnerable pupils and more complex learning needs, such as profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those with autism, enables them to increase their confidence and enjoy learning. Staff focus on developing the communication skills of these pupils and adding their understanding using symbols, signing and a range of well-chosen practical resources to deepen understanding.
- Teachers ensure that different groups of pupils, including the more able, are well supported by personalising the learning of all pupils in accordance with the requirements outlined in their statements. Learning journeys record the small steps of progress pupils make and provide annotated photographs showing good support for learning for all groups.
- Homework is set, where appropriate, to consolidate learning. For example, pupils regularly take reading books and other texts home to consolidate their reading.
- The school's information about pupils' progress and records from senior leaders' visits to lessons over time demonstrate that a few pockets of teaching require improvement and not enough teaching is outstanding. Teaching does not always promote pupils' writing as well as it promotes communication and reading. There are occasionally missed opportunities to promote writing in different activities or to provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their written work. This is particularly true for a few of the more-able pupils who 'switched off' learning because they were not challenged to apply their knowledge of grammar to produce extended piece of writing.
- Teachers have yet to use the new assessment arrangements to inform them of the progress different groups of pupils are making and to raise the achievement further, when the new curriculum and assessment arrangements are implemented.

### **The achievement of pupils**

**is good**

- Pupils' achievement is good. Children enter the Nursery with very low levels of attainment arising from their severe and complex special educational needs, they make good progress in all areas of learning as a result of good leadership and good provision.
- Pupils throughout the school continue to make good progress. This was seen in their books, in the school's data and in the school's observations of the impact of teaching over time on pupils' learning as well as inspectors' visits to lessons with senior leaders.
- Pupils make consistently good progress in communication skills, reading and numeracy and a few make outstanding progress in these areas. Pupils throughout the school make outstanding progress in their

personal, social and health education which rapidly increases their confidence and self-esteem as learners.

- The oldest pupils and sixth form students are making good progress in independent living, careers education and work-related learning, successfully following a wide range of relevant courses to secure their places in further education. In the past three years, nearly all destinations have been sustained.
- Different groups of pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those with autism make equally good progress as their classmates because they benefit from good support for learning.
- Pupils eligible for pupils premium make the same progress as their classmates and sometimes do better than them in reading, writing and mathematics because they receive good additional support for their learning by skilled teaching assistants.
- Pupils participate in a range of sporting activities during school time and after school. They exercise vigorously at break time and make good progress in physical education as a result of good teaching in this subject.
- More-able pupils are achieving as well as their classmates in nearly all subjects, although a few are not making sufficient progress in writing.

### The early years provision

is good

- The achievement of children in the Early Years is good. All groups of children, including those with severe and complex needs, those with autism and the relatively more able make equally good progress in all areas of learning from their very low starting points. They rapidly develop their communication skills through consistent use of signs and symbols by all staff.
- Good leadership has ensured good quality provision for children in the Nursery and Reception Years. This includes well-planned opportunities to personalise each area of learning to each child's individual needs, close work with parents, detailed tracking of each child's progress and high quality teaching. As a result, children settle into their routines quickly, learn well and make good progress. The Early Years leader is ensuring that the new curriculum requirements are being developed.
- Strong team work with staff and high levels of adult support throughout the school day ensure that children are safe. Their emotional health and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are effectively promoted through well-established routines. For example, in the Nursery, all children listened to a song about a 'rumble in the jungle' and were encouraged to sing along using signs and gestures. Staff used leaves for children to refer to as the jungle, supporting children's understanding of the song. In the Reception class, children used monkey masks to support learning as all adults signed. These activities promoted children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Off-task behaviour was dealt with effectively by adults so children quickly re-focused on learning.

### The sixth form provision

is good

- The quality of education in the sixth form is good. Students make good progress in their learning and are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. They successfully follow a range of relevant examination courses and a well-thought out programme of careers education and work-related learning. This enables them to make well-informed choices for their future pathways on leaving school, enabling them to transfer smoothly to further education. Students make outstanding progress in their personal social and health education programmes which enables them to leave school confidently, lead as independent lives and travel independently as possible, and sustain their destinations one year on.
- The quality of teaching is at least good with some outstanding teaching, for example, in food technology and business. Expectations for students' learning are high and teachers make good use of assessment information to personalise the learning programme for each student. Teachers set clear expectations for

learning and, as a result, students focus on their activities and do their best.

- Good leadership and management are ensuring that teaching is good, transition beyond school is well planned, community involvement is well developed and college links are strong. As a result, students learn well.
  
- The sixth form leader is reviewing the curriculum and assessment with the clear intention of having both of the new arrangements in place by September 2015.



## 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>	115464
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	447956

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 special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<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>	195
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	32
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Linda Mead
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Boatman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01376 529300
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