

Hall School

St Faith's Road, Old Catton, Norwich, NR6 7AD

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

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

- Pupils make good progress and successfully develop key skills because teaching is good. They learn how to communicate with others effectively because of valuable staff expertise and the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- Reception children achieve well and begin to fill gaps in their knowledge. Parents and staff work really well together and so children settle quickly into school life.
- Sixth form students make good progress and develop their basic skills because practical activities are used to make learning interesting.
- Behaviour is outstanding and pupils concentrate very successfully. They are extremely respectful and tolerant of others, whatever their background or ability.
- Pupils' safety is a high priority for all staff and so pupils feel extremely safe in school. Parents agree that pupils are kept safe.
- In recent years, pupils' attendance has improved considerably and it is now above average.
- Staff expect a great deal from every pupil and get to know their needs well. All staff work productively together as a team. They are proud to work at the school.
- Pupils are extremely self-confident young people who perform in community sports and musical events to large groups of people.
- Governors and leaders are always looking at ways to improve the school. A significant improvement since the last inspection is the tracking of all groups of pupils' progress. This means that pupils' achievement has improved over the last few years and is good.
- A good leadership team, including subject leaders, watch pupils' achievement and the impact of teaching carefully. They ensure that those pupils who are making slower progress receive extra support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally feedback for pupils, including those in Reception, is not particularly detailed and so they are not totally clear about what they did well and might do to improve their skills.
- Pupils are not always given new individual targets promptly. This is because the dates when some targets are met are not clearly recorded and acted on.
- Pupils make slightly slower progress in science than in other key subjects.
- Staff do not regularly help to collect evidence that they have met their personal targets to improve their teaching skills.
- The range of vocational courses for sixth form students is not broad enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 14 lessons, some jointly with members of staff and the headteacher. As well as observing lessons inspectors also studied pupils' records of achievement in Reception and in many year groups, including the sixth form. They heard some pupils read and attended a whole-school assembly.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, other staff with responsibility for areas of the school's work and with pupils. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body and spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- Not enough responses were added to the Ofsted Parent View survey but 41 responses to the school's recent parent questionnaire were taken into consideration.
- Inspectors took into account 12 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including records of pupils' progress and behaviour, and learning plans for individual pupils. They looked at records of leaders' checks on teaching, governors' meetings and at documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Debra McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils have very complex needs and a statement of special educational needs.
- The school operates on one site. Alternative providers are not used to educate pupils.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average and over half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The pupil premium is government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British. A few speak English as an additional language and are from minority ethnic groups.
- Children in the early years attend school full time.
- In the sixth form students stay on site except when they use local facilities for sports, attend residential activities in the UK and abroad, and participate in community activities with other schools or in work experience.
- Outreach to other schools is a well-established service and supports pupils' communication skills and behaviour management.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop pupils' achievement and the impact of teaching on their learning by ensuring that:
 - pupils make better progress in science
 - pupils, including those in Reception, always receive detailed feedback about what they have done well and can do to improve their work
 - all pupils are given new individual targets as soon as the old ones are met
 - all staff help leaders to collect evidence that they have met their personal targets to improve their teaching skills.
- Widen the range of vocational qualifications available to sixth form students.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's very perceptive leadership means that the school is a friendly and safe place for all pupils. From the moment pupils arrive in the morning, they are greeted by welcoming staff and treated with great respect. This means that pupils flourish in the school and their personal, social and emotional development is outstanding.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education and sport funding well. Pupils of all ages take part in a wide range of physical activities and local competitions. This year, pupils collected a record number of medals in the special school summer games; pupils won medals for running, archery, table cricket and indoor rowing. Pupils learn to swim and many swim unaided by the time they leave the school.
- The school works diligently to treat all pupils equally and discrimination is not tolerated. All pupils are included in school activities, whatever their background and ability. The development of pupils' communication skills is a high priority for school leaders. A dedicated team of staff, including speech therapists, work to support any pupils making slower progress. This term the pupils receiving this extra help are making much better progress as a result.
- A rich variety of topics are planned for pupils. They develop basic skills successfully through exciting projects which develop more than one skill at once. Pupils learn productively about other parts of the world. For example, they learnt to play the didgeridoo when they studied the customs of Australian people. Their understanding of life in modern Britain is promoted very well through topics which explore the beliefs and views of others. Pupils learnt effectively about British democracy when they voted for a class representative to create a school council.
- Pupils receive valuable careers advice and some take part in work experience. All pupils go on to further education or training after they leave the school. A strong partnership with parents means that the transfer to the next stage of a child's life is smooth. Staff often go the extra mile and help pupils to move to the best place for them even after they have left the school.
- The school carefully evaluates its strengths and areas for development. It has created a useful development plan for the school. Since the last inspection the school has made considerable improvements, including its use of innovative ICT programmes which support many groups of pupils. Pupil premium funding is used thoughtfully and so these pupils make similar progress to others. One-to-one tuition is utilised carefully and records of achievement demonstrate pupils' successes in key areas of learning and in using ICT.
- Outreach services support local schools well. Skilled staff provide other schools with assistance in how to develop pupils' communication skills using various approaches, including ICT. Behaviour management is also nurtured in other schools because of considerable staff expertise in this area.
- The senior leadership team, including subject leaders, watch over and successfully develop staff skills in teaching. Staff are given specific feedback about their strengths and areas for development. Occasionally, staff are not effectively involved by leaders in collecting evidence that these personal targets are met. This means that they are not clear how successfully they have developed their teaching skills in new aspects of their work.
- Leaders have made a good start in developing new assessment criteria in response to changes in National Curriculum requirements. They are working productively with a group of special schools to establish a clear set of assessment measures for pupils at all stages of development.
- The school works effectively with the local authority; for example, it is assisting the school to analyse data more successfully and identify where teaching has less impact on pupils' progress. Staff and governors have completed a wide range of courses provided by the local authority to keep pupils safe.
- The school meets all the requirements to keep pupils safe. All the necessary checks are made before staff

are left in sole charge of pupils. A single central register of the checks undertaken on staff is updated regularly. Staff are very effectively trained in child protection procedures and how to report any concerns they may have.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors check carefully on how the school is doing. They use data about pupils' progress and results successfully to decide where the school could be improved. They regularly receive useful reports about key areas of learning from subject leaders.
- Governors keep a close eye on the impact teaching has on pupils' progress using a variety of methods, including records of pupils' achievement and data. They are aware that the teaching of science is not as strong as it could be; they know that the school is working to develop pupils' progress in this area of learning.
- The headteacher's and staff's performance is carefully monitored by governors. They ensure that staff who get good results from their work with pupils are suitably rewarded.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is because staff are extremely vigilant; they take time to find out what triggers pupils' frustrations and find ways to stop this happening. This means that pupils improve their behaviour very successfully and learn how to get on with their work. They become very polite young people, including those in the sixth form. They greet people thoughtfully and socialise exceptionally well in groups. Parents, staff and governors all agree that behaviour is outstanding.
- Since the last inspection, no exclusions of any type have occurred and no racial incidents have taken place. Pupils show exceptional respect for others whatever their ability. They are very tolerant of people from different minority groups and backgrounds.
- Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and settle quickly to their work. They concentrate extremely productively and enjoy school so much that some say they would like to come to school in the holidays. This is because staff are very enthusiastic about their work with pupils.
- Pupils' self-esteem is very high, and they are keen to try new activities and learn new skills. They sing and sign confidently in front of large audiences. They all get on very well and help each other out if they need any extra support.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils learn outstanding well about how to keep themselves safe inside and outside school. Pupils, including those who are in the sixth form, learn how to stay safe when they travel on public transport and cross the roads. Staff use assemblies very successfully to explain how to keep safe, for example around fireworks.
- In the last three years, pupils' attendance has improved considerably and is now above average. Nearly all absences are for medical reasons. Staff monitor pupils' attendance carefully and follow up any absences promptly. They discuss pupils' attendance rates in regular meetings with parents and explain how this affects their progress.
- Bullying is very rare. One member of staff who has worked at the school for a long time said, 'I have never known a case of bullying at the school.' Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet, including when they go on social media sites.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff expect a lot from pupils and think carefully about the best way to develop their basic skills. This means that pupils improve their English, communication and mathematical understanding. Work in pupils' records of achievement, school checks and observations made during the inspection show that teaching is

good.

- Pupils learn to communicate using speech, signing, writing and ICT well because staff are always looking for new and effective ways to work with pupils. They learn to explain what they are thinking using new technology because of valuable staff expertise and knowledge.
- Pupils use letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) to help them learn to read. This is because staff ensure that this knowledge is taught regularly and the skills are built up systematically. Staff do a great deal to encourage pupils to improve their reading and develop their comprehension skills.
- The pupils learn to use mathematics well. The staff use questions thoughtfully to find out what pupils do and do not understand. They carefully challenge pupils to work with money and solve problems.
- Staff form positive relationships with pupils and encourage them to persevere when things get tough. This means that pupils concentrate and apply themselves assiduously to all the tasks they are set. The staff work well as a team and ensure that pupils' needs are met, whatever their ability or stage of development.
- Practical activities are used effectively to capture pupils' interests, whether they are in Reception or the sixth form. In a session observed in the sixth form, students learnt how to make a vegetable curry. They practised cutting up vegetables and then combined the ingredients.
- Pupils' individual targets are displayed on the classroom walls so that everyone can see what skills each pupil is working on. Sometimes the date when these targets are achieved is not recorded and so it is not clear how long ago they were met. Occasionally, targets are not replaced with new ones. This does not help staff to always give pupils specific feedback about how they have excelled, and what they could do to improve their work and reach higher levels of knowledge.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is good because nearly all pupils make the expected amount of progress and a good proportion make better than this, particularly in communication, reading, writing, mathematics and ICT.
- Pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding make good progress and their achievement is similar to other pupils. This is because the funding is used well to meet their individual needs, for example by providing extra sessions with speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.
- More-able pupils make good progress throughout the school. They learn to read a range of texts, create stories and use mathematics effectively. Pupils in Year 11 and in the sixth form gain qualifications, such as ASDAN, which demonstrate their skills in personal and social development as well as in employability. Some more-able students have started to study AQA units.
- The school tracks groups of pupils' progress in key subjects carefully and shares this information with governors. Pupils' progress in science has improved this year but it is a little lower than in other key subjects. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make similarly good progress to others in the school.
- There is no marked difference between the progress made by boys and girls, including those with severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, and profound and multiple learning difficulties.

The early years provision

is good

- Children get off to a good start to their education in Reception. Children start at the school with skills which are significantly lower than those typical for their age. The staff carefully record what they can and cannot do. They begin to fill the gaps successfully. Work in learning journeys and folders show that children make good progress in all areas of learning because they are taught well.

- Children learn to listen more thoughtfully and follow instructions. They enjoy playing games and share equipment fairly. The children like singing songs and begin to work together in groups fruitfully. They behave really well because staff manage them well. They feel safe in school.
- Staff set children individual targets in the key areas of learning. These targets are shared with parents and reviewed regularly. Staff plan activities which are not too hard and not too easy for each child. Detailed planning for the week is displayed thoughtfully on the wall so that everyone can see which basic skills are being developed. Occasionally, staff do not fully explain to children how they have been successful and what they could do to make their work even better.
- A considerable improvement since the last inspection has been the creation of a system which shows how much progress children make in Reception. Leaders use this system to keep a close eye on the achievement of each child. This ensures that any child making slower progress is picked up quickly. Children are prepared well for the next stage of education. This year, some children in Year 1 have nearly caught up and are working closer to the stage of development typical for their age.

The sixth form provision is good

- Students in the sixth form make good progress and nearly all go on to further education or college. They learn how to use their basic skills in a variety of ways. They go shopping in local supermarkets using their communication, reading and mathematics skills to purchase a list of necessary items.
- Records of achievement celebrate their successes. All students gain ASDAN qualifications in key skills. Some more-able students are working to gain AQA units of study. Students learn to communicate in various ways, including using ICT devices. For instance, pupils used ICT well when they drew images and filled in shapes with different colours.
- Exciting projects are planned which involve students in practical activities. This means that students learn about what it feels like to travel by aeroplane and go to different parts of the world. This is because staff use the studio area and resources to set up fascinating drama projects. Reading, writing and mathematical activities are woven seamlessly into this work. Teaching is good because staff offer a careful balance of support and challenge for students.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the students are outstanding. They are exceptionally motivated, happy and self-confident. They gain great enjoyment from activities provided and apply themselves extremely well. They say they really enjoy the residential trips in the UK and in France and feel safe in school.
- Leaders keep a close eye on how much progress students are making. The school records show that the longer a student is at the school, the better their progress. The school's leaders are always looking for ways to improve the school but few vocational courses are available which would broaden the range of qualifications available to students.

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	121257
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	447962

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Alcock
Headteacher	Keith McKenzie
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2011
Telephone number	01603 466467
Fax number	01603 466407
Email address	office@hall.norfolk.sch.uk

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