

Stoke Leys Close, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 9ET

Inspection dates	20–21 November 2014
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Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school's leaders have ensured that, from very low starting points, pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics over time.
- Pupils' communication, reading and language skills are improving rapidly because of the contribution of speech and language therapists.
- Pupils make good progress because of the generally good teaching in the three departments. Teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals plan well together. As a result, almost all pupils in need of extra help receive it.
- Pupils with profound multiple learning difficulties and children in the early years make outstanding progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar or better progress than other pupils in the school. Gaps between their progress and that of other pupils nationally are closing.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding because staff use a common approach which pupils understand and respect. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their respect for each other and adults are exceptional.
- The school's strategies to keep pupils safe are outstanding. Pupils say they are exceptionally well cared for and feel very secure.
- Pupils like coming to school because they enjoy the variety of school activities organised for them. Consequently, their attendance is above average.
- Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education supports their outstanding behaviour. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain through topics that are planned a year or more in advance.
- The new Principal and new head of school, together with governors, parents and carers, are united in their clear vision for moving the school forward. The school is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Since the last inspection, heads of departments and subject leaders have not checked the quality of teaching closely enough, allowing weaknesses to develop.
- Some of the more-able pupils are not making rapid enough progress because the activities planned for them lack challenge.
- The more-able pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing. Weaknesses in teachers' marking inhibits pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed pupils learning and looked at their work. They observed 16 parts of lessons and visited many subjects across the school. All lessons were jointly observed with either a member of the senior leadership team or a head of department. Inspectors also discussed the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching and visited an assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils and listened to them read. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at recreational times.
- Inspectors looked at documentation such as policies, including those relating to safeguarding and behaviour, and the school's improvement plans. They looked at attendance figures, records of behaviour incidents, the school's website and records of local authority reviews.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal, head of school and middle leaders, to discuss the progress that groups of pupils make throughout the school. They analysed the school's information on attainment and progress. The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers as represented in the school's survey of parents and the 13 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspectors took into account the views of the 92 staff who completed the staff questionnaire and talked to staff during the inspection.
- This inspection took place at the same time as the inspection of Stocklake Park and Harding House. A joint, final feedback for the inspections was held at Booker Park.

Inspection team

Justina Ilochi, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Buist	Additional Inspector
Kim Bolton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Booker Park Community School is a special school which caters for primary-age pupils with a range of complex medical, physical and special educational needs, including autism. The school is part of the Vale Federation of Special Schools, together with the secondary school, Stocklake Park, and the post-16 provision at Harding House.
- A fifth of pupils are girls.
- Half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, a fifth of Pakistani heritage and the rest from a range of minority backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A third of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average. This additional government funding is for children in the care of the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Almost all pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend full time.
- Both the Principal and the head of school took up their posts in September 2014. The Principal is the overall head of the Vale Federation.
- The school works with several professionals with varying specialisms commissioned by external agencies, including the National Health Service. There is an on-site team of speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.
- Pupils are organised into three departments according to their special educational needs. One department caters for pupils in the early years, Key Stage 1 and 2 with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and pupils with low-functioning autism and sensory processing difficulties. A second department provides for pupils from Years 1 to 6 who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and/or high-functioning autism. The third department caters for pupils from Years 1 to 6 who have moderate and severe learning difficulties. Approximately a third of the pupils have a diagnosis of autism.
- The school is part of the Buckinghamshire Teaching School Initial Teaching Training Partnership. This is a partnership of secondary, primary, special schools and a secondary pupil referral unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up the progress of the more-able pupils by ensuring that:
 - heads of departments and subject leaders regularly check to make sure that their learning needs are consistently well supported
 - teachers plan activities that always challenge them to work as hard as they can
 - teachers mark their work carefully so that they know what to do to improve their writing and mathematics
 - they are encouraged to write at length in as many subjects as possible.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Supported by the governors and other school leaders, the new Principal is refining and strengthening many of the school's systems and procedures. The management of teachers' performance is now linked more closely to their salaries and firm steps have been taken to improve the quality of the provision by investing in staff training. New and newly qualified teachers benefit from the school's membership of the Buckinghamshire Teaching Schools Partnership. All these factors show that the school has good capacity to improve further.
- Good provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education contributes to pupils' exceptional behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate the diversity of different cultures and faiths, an area for improvement from the school's last inspection. Wall displays in each department confirm the school's good attention to the preparation of pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The school benefits from experts in various aspects who work successfully in the three departments. Their contribution helps to foster strong relationships between staff and pupils, and to promote equal opportunities. For example, together with teachers and teaching assistants, they have planned stimulating morning activities which involve all pupils. This has helped pupils with profound multiple learning difficulties to learn routine self-help activities and settle down quickly for their day.
- The subjects taught in all departments meet the needs and interests of pupils. The school also offers a variety of enrichment activities through after-school clubs and creative topics planned a year or more in advance. Pupils said that they enjoy these activities.
- The school has used focused one-to-one and small group teaching to improve the reading, writing and mathematical skills of pupils eligible for additional funding and this is having a positive impact on the progress of this group.
- The school has effective arrangements for spending the primary sport funding. The funds have been used to buy in extra sports coaches and equipment so pupils can take part in a wider range of sporting activities. Funds have also been used to improve teachers' expertise through training. The school is monitoring the impact of this spending and can demonstrate its success.
- The school engages well with parents and carers, taking every opportunity to seek their views and involve them in making improvements.
- There has been a failure to monitor teaching with sufficient rigour since the last inspection. As a result, some of the more-able pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or moderate learning difficulties have not made the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Now, increasingly, heads of department and subject leaders are using information about pupils' progress and their needs to undertake lesson observations and check the accuracy of test results. While this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, some minor inconsistencies remain.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school and reviewed the effectiveness of the school's improvement measures. Its contribution has had a positive impact on how the school views itself and its plans for the future.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have worked effectively to improve the impact of their support. They have had relevant training and know about the national guidance relating to teachers' performance and pupils' progress. They are aware of the main strengths of the school and know where improvements are required. For example, they know that the behaviour of pupils is outstanding and have commended staff for their efforts. Governors supported the appointment of the new Principal and head of school, and effectively hold them to account for the school's performance and the management of its finances. Governors visit the school regularly to see for themselves how well it is doing and make sure that the system for managing the performance of staff is effective. They support improvements in the quality of teaching and ensure that these are linked closely to pay for teachers and senior leaders. The governing body carefully monitors how the primary sport funding and the pupil premium are allocated. Governors have noted that the gaps between the performance of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and others have closed or narrowed. The governing body ensures the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and knows that they meet statutory requirements. Members seek the views of parents and carers on important issues and check that the school suitably prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Almost all parents and carers who responded to questionnaires were extremely positive about behaviour in the school.
- Pupils are extremely well behaved in classrooms and around the school. This is because all staff share a common approach to the management of behaviour. As a result, pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and pupils with autism make rapid progress in their behaviour from very low starting points.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and approach their learning with enthusiasm. They focus well in lessons even when teaching is not quite as motivating or engaging as it should be. They are eager to work hard and they appreciate the rewards they receive for their outstanding behaviour and contribution to school life.
- Pupils take pride in their work and their books are neat and tidy. They have excellent manners; a handful of them shook the hand of one of the inspectors after their meeting. Relationships across the school are very positive.
- The extremely effective spiritual, moral, cultural and social curriculum prepares pupils from a range of cultures well for life in modern Britain. For example, every term pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught about sex and relationships, and feelings and emotions. Consequently the school is a harmonious and happy community with pupils valuing each other's beliefs and ideas.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being part of the school council, as this allows them to contribute to improvements in their school. They successfully organise many fundraising events to raise money for charities.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel happy and safe at school, and know to whom they should talk, if necessary.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they are extremely well cared for. They know about different types of bullying, especially cyber-bullying. School records show that bullying rarely happens and, when it does, it is exceptionally well dealt with.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and only miss whole or half days for medical reasons. Their attendance over the last three years has been above average.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is mostly good in all departments. Pupils learn in a welcoming and attractive environment which promotes excellent relationships. One pupil said that teachers are 'caring and fun and want us to do well'.
- Good teaching has brought about good achievement for most pupils in reading, writing and mathematics over the past three years. Increasingly effective use of information about pupils' progress means that teachers can now plan activities that successfully build on pupils' understanding from the previous lesson. However, this has not been the case with some of the more-able pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or autism who make slower progress than they should because they are not always suitably challenged.
- Pupils' reading is steadily improving because staff ensure that most pupils read regularly, both at school and at home. They have good strategies for tackling any hard words. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well to pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties and they make good progress.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language develop good communication and language skills because of the strong contribution of teaching assistants who support them one-to-one with good resources such as visual cues and signing.
- The quality of pupils' writing is improving because teachers and occupational therapists collaborate successfully to improve pupils' handwriting. However, sometimes the more-able pupils are not encouraged to write at sufficient length in a range of subjects.
- There are some examples of good practice in marking. However, feedback from teachers and other adults does not always make clear how pupils can improve their work. As a result, pupils do not always correct their mistakes or check that they are not repeating errors. This slows the progress of the more-able pupils in writing and mathematics.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From very low starting points, most pupils make rapid progress in communication, reading, writing and mathematics as they progress through the school. In the last three years, all pupils with profound multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties in Years 1 to 6 made exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Pupils make good progress in writing, and their speaking and listening skills develop well because they have many opportunities to discuss ideas with a 'talk partner' or in groups. As a result, the few pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly become confident speakers of English.
- Pupils with autism in all departments are making good progress in mathematics. This is because teachers and teaching assistants are well trained in the support of autistic pupils. For example, an autistic pupil was given the opportunity to use the 'sense of touch and feel' of shapes during a mathematics lesson. This led to similarly good progress being made by all pupils in the lesson.
- In 2013, pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 were two terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, the gap had closed. The progress of eligible pupils is still almost a year behind the progress of other pupils nationally, but the gap is narrowing.
- Pupils' achievement is not yet outstanding because some of the more-able pupils are not yet making the same rapid gains in their writing and mathematics as other pupils in the school.

The early years provision is outstanding

- The early years provision is outstanding because it is extremely well led and managed. The school's checks on children's early development from when they start in the school in Nursery or Reception are accurate. Children make rapid progress from typically low starting points.
- An exciting range of outdoor and indoor activities provides children with many opportunities to develop communication and language skills, preparing them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and the move to Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Staff consistently ensure that the children's environment is stimulating enough to hold their attention and extend their learning. A multi-sensory approach matches the abilities and needs of all children in the early years, leading to outstanding learning.
- The positive contribution of occupational therapists and physiotherapists is supporting the learning of children with complex medical and physical needs so that they make outstanding progress towards their individual targets.
- Children feel safe and secure because adults are always around to look after their needs. Staff have clear expectations of behaviour which they patiently teach the children through a set of daily routines including songs, dance and signing. This helps children's exceptional progress and the rapid development of self-help skills.

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	110588
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	448124

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Coneron
Principal	Christine Ludlow
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 May 2010
Telephone number	01296 427 221
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