

Kelford School

Oakdale Road, Kimberworth, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S61 2NU

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The large majority of pupils at each key stage make good progress in communicating, reading, writing and mathematics. A significant minority make outstanding progress.
- Pupils start to learn at a quick pace in early years and continue this throughout their time in school. They are always well motivated and constantly improve their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Good early years provision ensures children make good progress in all areas of learning, most particularly in communication, personal, social and emotional development and physical development.
- The effective leadership and management of the sixth form ensure all students benefit from the wide range of carefully planned work and activities. As a result, students make good progress. Students are mature and independent and well prepared for the future.
- The good teaching over time plays a crucial role in pupils' good learning and progress.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and value their experiences. Parents are very pleased and greatly reassured that their children are happy and behave well at school. Pupils thrive on the excellent care and support they receive from staff. This brings out their best qualities and promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Leaders and governors are rigorous in ensuring the arrangements for keeping pupils safe and teaching pupils how to stay safe are effective.
- The headteacher sets very high standards and in doing so has gained parents' strong support and a high reputation for the school. Senior leaders have developed an outstanding vision that is constantly extending the boundaries of what the school can achieve. A significant contribution is made to supporting other schools and building strong partnerships.
- Leaders, managers and governors invest substantial energy and skill into improving the school. They check teaching and pupils' progress carefully ensuring they stay effective and improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders are not making sure that the planning of teaching is always clear about what pupils will learn so they can make even better progress.
- A few opportunities are missed across the school day to promote pupils' communication skills and their independence.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. The headteacher and head of school joined inspectors in some of these observations.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector listened to a small group of pupils reading and spoke to a group of pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documents including information on pupils' progress, the school development plan, the school's own evaluation of its work and policies and procedures for child protection and the safeguarding pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the views of 10 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). The school's own recent survey of parents' views was considered. The views of the 14 staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were examined.

Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Massey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The greatest proportion of pupils experience severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties which adversely affect their physical abilities, speech, language and communication. Some pupils also have additional health complications. In addition to their learning difficulties, about one-fifth of pupils have autistic spectrum conditions.
- Early years provision is provided full and part time for children in Nursery Year and Reception.
- The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is above average, as is the proportion new to speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school is in federation with Maltby Hilltop School; both special schools share the same executive headteacher and the same governing body.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Senior and middle leaders should further intensify their checks on teaching and eliminate the few weaknesses in teaching and take advantage of every opportunity for pupils to make progress by:
 - ensuring teachers always plan lesson activities with clear objectives that extend pupils' learning by building on what they already know and can do
 - making sure in lessons and in the less structured parts of the school day full use is made of opportunities to promote pupils' communication skills and their independence.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders are relentless in their pursuit of raising pupils' achievement. They work with determination to remove barriers to learning through giving substantial support for pupils and their families thus ensuring all groups of pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. The local authority holds the school in high esteem and needs only to provide it with light touch support.
- Leaders reach out to local schools effectively supporting their endeavours to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The large inclusion and outreach team use their substantial experience and expertise to guide and support schools and families but also coordinate the network of support in the community for parents and their children. Links with Maltby Hilltop School and other special schools are used effectively to share good practice, especially to compare assessments and develop new curriculum initiatives.
- Middle leaders are driven by positive team spirit. They lead and manage their responsibilities well. Their impact on improvement is developing alongside their increasing capacity to shoulder accountability for the success of their work. Senior leaders have set the team high expectations and effectively encourage the growth of their vision and ambition. They see the further development of middle leadership as key to moving the school to outstanding.
- Well-planned, systematic checks on all aspects of the school's work provide a coherent picture of its effectiveness and clear pathways to improvement. Leaders' assessments of teaching carefully cross-referenced to checks on pupils' progress flow into teachers' annual performance targets and the school's improvement planning. While this improves the quality of teaching, there are a few instances when checks on teaching do not uncover weaker practice. Middle leaders' contributions to checking the school's work is beginning to increase leaders' overall capacity for improvement.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet requirements. Training for safeguarding and staff alertness is of a high order. Procedures supporting safeguarding are rigorously checked by senior leaders and governors.
- Leaders have made well-considered choices in spending the pupil premium and the physical education and sports premium. Careful study of which areas of the curriculum can be developed for best impact has meant disadvantaged pupils make good progress and there is no gap in their performance with other pupils. The curriculum is further enriched with more opportunities for sport, outdoor and adventure activities that widen pupils' experiences and have raised participation in physical activities for all.
- The curriculum is very well adapted to pupils' different needs and very effectively promotes their interests and talents. It is rich in cultural experiences through which pupils sing, play music and act. Pupils have good opportunities to gain essential literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. Their personal, social and emotional development is very effectively promoted so that by the time they leave they are well prepared for the future in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are exceptionally effective in finding out about the school, checking the school's work for themselves and acting robustly in asking questions and holding leaders to account. They are visionary and ambitious as senior leaders and independent in spirit in pursuing all they hold dear for the school and its future success. Governors are well organised and sharply focused in managing all of their responsibilities. They keep up to date with training and do their work effectively, ensuring all aspects of safeguarding pupils are being well managed. Governors collect comprehensive information from the school about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in particular, analysing this rigorously and challenging leaders where the need for improvement arises. They check carefully that teachers have met their targets before advancing further and ensure they are properly rewarded for their successes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents' comments are all positive and typical of them is, 'He absolutely loves Kelford and can't wait to go back to school after the holidays.'
- Pupils' relationships with staff and with each other are very positive. Pupils listen carefully to staff and cooperate, willingly following routines and obeying instructions.
- The high expectations placed on pupils ensure they develop good attitudes to learning. They work hard, are keen to complete tasks, achieve success and are pleased when they have done well. Pupils respond

very positively to expectations that they take as much responsibility and act as independently as possible in tackling their work. Over time many pupils need less support, which prepares them well for the future.

- Pupils develop considerable self-confidence and are keen to take part in many new experiences offered through the wider curriculum. They thoroughly enjoy the opportunities to perform music and parts in plays in front of audiences.
- Behaviour at lunchtime and play time is good. Pupils are willing to try the good variety of healthy food prepared for them. While eating, they remain quiet and sociable and do as much as possible for themselves. However, the older pupils who finish eating early, rather than getting away to lunchtime activities, are made to remain quietly seated and wait while others finish. This goes somewhat against the grain of leaders' aim of encouraging their responsibility and independence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding policies and procedures are fully understood by all staff. Alongside their regular training in safeguarding, staff are well equipped and cope effectively with their responsibilities for pupils' health and safety.
- Policies are available to parents and these offer much advice and guidance on keeping their children safe, particularly if they are using the internet.
- The school is very well resourced with the expertise and specialist staff to provide first aid, deal with the moving and handling of disabled pupils and give support in relation to medical conditions and managing behaviour.
- The curriculum offers many opportunities for pupils to learn about and manage risks. In their visits to the community pupils learn how to stay safe on roads and when they are doing work-related learning. Pupils learn about the risks of using the internet and social media. However, what is taught is not yet as well adapted to pupils' needs, as leaders would like to ensure pupils gain as much knowledge and understanding as possible of this technology.
- Pupils get on well together and treat each other with respect. They understand regard for one another and often form warm friendships. Pupils know there are good and bad ways of treating others and their efforts to be good means there is no bullying in any of its forms. They know the difference between good and bad behaviour and contribute effectively to ensuring everyone is happy at school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers and their assistants are exceptionally caring and supportive of pupils. They get to know them well and work hard to ensure each pupil feels safe, comfortable, valued and happy. The good relationships with pupils makes them motivated learners.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed extremely well. Staff are expert at maintaining a calm, purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and around the school. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' capacity to learn and make progress.
- The expectations for the amount of progress pupils should make are ambitious and this gives most lessons pace and a sharp focus on what knowledge and skills pupils should gain from their work.
- The planning of pupils' work is often very precise, particularly their individual tasks. Teachers and their assistants are meticulous in noting when pupils make even the smallest breakthroughs. Assessment is thorough and usually makes very effective use of accurate information about pupils' learning and progress in setting work which builds their knowledge and skills step by step. Planning is not always of this quality, so learning is not extended fully.
- Teaching promotes good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Pupils are taught expertly to communicate by the most effective means possible. Whether using gesturing, signing, symbols or speech, pupils are encouraged to engage with others and make choices.
- Frequent repetition of work and regularly revisiting what has been learnt previously is effective in pupils securing knowledge and skills. Pupils develop good learning habits, which ensure they manage as much of their work as possible on their own.
- When pupils learn as a whole group they greatly enjoy the musical introductions to some lessons and get very involved in singing and movement, which helps them recall times tables. Occasionally, the pace of the counting song is too quick for some pupils to keep up.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils make the progress expected from their starting points and some do better than this. This also

applies to those pupils from a minority ethnic heritage. A small proportion of pupils make less progress than expected although the reasons for this are varied and sometimes due to the complexity of their needs.

- Leaders are determined to understand and eliminate whatever causes they can tackle effectively and in strengthening the capacity of middle leadership enable an ever closer check on the few who appear to fall behind.
- The large majority of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium benefit from extra support and curriculum experiences. They achieve well like the other pupils and the close track leaders keep on their progress shows that, when compared with the other pupils, there is no gap in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well in developing communication skills. From the moment they start school they are constantly engaged in talking, signing and using symbols in classrooms and all around the school. Some master the use of electronic communication aids, increasing the breadth of their vocabulary and the speed at which they can respond. Pupils are able, often for the first time, to say what they like or dislike, make choices and say how they feel. From an early stage pupils gain a good grasp of what adults are saying in knowing signs and symbols and this stimulates rapid learning and progress. Some parents have learnt to sign and use symbols so their children's skills can continue to improve at home.
- Pupils read symbols with increasing fluency over time. They look at pictures and gain their meaning, which helps them experience and enjoy stories before they read words. Most pupils use the sounds letters make to help them recognise words. The more able pupils apply this skill to reading independently to understand and talk about what they have read.
- Pupils who are not prevented by disabilities or the complexity of the learning difficulties learn at the outset to hold a pen and control the marks they make. Many make good progress in writing their name and composing simple sentences to record thoughts and their work.
- Counting songs and rhymes help pupils count to 10 and beyond or counting in steps of 2 and 10 up to 100. The most able pupils check their work carefully. For example, one pupil matched solid shapes to descriptions of their properties. He counted the sides, edges and angles of a cuboid to make sure his choice was correct.

The early years provision

is good

- The provision for children in Nursery Year and Reception is well led and managed. The teacher in charge has a good understanding of all that should be provided in early years and drives improvement effectively. All aspects of children's welfare are managed effectively and they are kept safe.
- As one of the school's middle leaders the teacher in charge is managing to an increasing extent checking teaching, children's outcomes and improvement planning. This has resulted in a number of positive changes to the way children are grouped, improving their access to all of the early years activities.
- Children have good opportunities to choose their activities and move freely between the classroom and outdoor area. They enjoy doing this and like the attention staff give them, which is always focused on encouraging communication and other key skills. One child learnt to walk in the first few months and most become increasingly independent in managing their needs.
- The links with parents have been strengthened. What parents know about their children and what parents would like from the early years are key parts of assessing children's starting points and in agreeing their targets. Parents visits and home visits made by staff strengthen the partnership ensuring expectations are clear and realistic for all parties. Parents are encouraged to use the communication symbols children learn in school.
- Assessment of children's learning is thorough as teachers and their assistants are constantly busy checking and noting signs of progress. Records build up a comprehensive picture of progress across all areas of learning, which is used to plan children's next steps.
- Teaching is good. Staff get to know children well and a positive relationship allows good behaviour and communication to grow. Teachers and their assistants talk frequently to children and contribute significantly to improving children's speaking and listening skills. Occasionally, further opportunities for children to use their communication skills are missed such as not signing when this is appropriate. Children whose complex learning difficulties hinder their involvement get all the encouragement they need to respond well and take an active part in play and other interactions.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Leaders are effective in maintaining a culture of adult attitudes and expectations to which students respond positively. It causes them to grow in maturity, responsibility and independence. They learn that they are not only responsible for themselves but also others. Students make good contributions to raising money for charitable causes and to fund some of their own enterprises. Their progress is kept under close scrutiny. Teaching and the curriculum are rigorously checked so ensuring provision meets students' needs.
- Teaching is good and is consistent in promoting adult values. Teachers and their assistant set high expectations for students to be personally responsible for their attitudes to learning and independent in tackling their work. In this respect, adults are careful to talk to students and use language which is age-appropriate and gives students the opportunities to make decisions and choose for themselves.
- Good relationships reflect students' growing maturity and independence. Staff know students extremely well and use thorough assessments to plan work well matched to their needs, including the point they are at in their learning.
- The full range of work and activities planned for students prepares them well for the future and for moving to college and other settings. The arrangements for students leaving the sixth form are extremely well managed so that transfers are smooth and students are well equipped to get the best from colleges and other settings.
- Much of their learning takes place in the community where they can apply their knowledge and skills in real-life situations such as using public transport, shops and leisure facilities.
- Students, for whom it is appropriate, and with considerable success, take part in work experience with local employers. However, all students experience work-related learning such as the upkeep of the school garden or acquiring catering skills in food technology.
- Students behave exceptionally well and rise effectively to teachers' high expectations of them. Attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Students listen carefully and respond well to instructions. They follow routines religiously and are concerned to contribute to the sixth form's calm and purposeful atmosphere.

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	106968
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	447884

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Phillips
Headteacher	Nick Whittaker
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2011
Telephone number	01709 512088
Fax number	01709 512091
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