

Durants School

4 Pitfield Way, Enfield, EN3 5BY

Inspection dates 2–3 December 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
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and his senior leaders have high expectations of staff and students and their drive and commitment have continued to improve the school. They have ensured that teaching is consistently good.
- The governing body carries out its role effectively, ensuring the school continues to improve. Governors are fully committed to enabling students to play a full role in the wider community.
- Teachers and support staff make lessons interesting, engaging students in a wide variety of activities. Staff are highly effective in enabling students to overcome the difficulties they have in learning.
- The school's curriculum is well planned and prepares students well for their future education, training or employment.
- Students have excellent attitudes and their behaviour is outstanding. They work very effectively with staff to overcome problems and learn to manage their own behaviour.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is excellent.
- Students make good progress in English and mathematics and all groups achieve well. Students use a variety of ways of communicating effectively, and this helps their progress.
- Sixth form provision is excellent. It provides students with a wide range of learning opportunities both in school and out in the wider community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Student's academic progress is good rather than outstanding. Sometimes they do not build on what they can already do and so progress slows.
- It is not always clear what students are learning about in lessons. Time is not always used efficiently to enable them to progress as fast as they could.
- When appropriate, marking in books is not used to help students know how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons and an assembly, observing students in all year groups. All of the lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- An inspector visited the school’s shop, which is in the local community, and the additionally resourced provision in a local mainstream secondary school.
- Inspectors also looked at attendance information, safeguarding arrangements and other key documents.
- A sample of students’ work was analysed and comparisons made between the achievements of different groups of students. Inspectors analysed the school’s performance data showing the attainment and progress of students.
- Inspectors held discussions with a randomly selected group of students, middle leaders, two governors and a parent or carer. They also held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- They took account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and 42 questionnaires from school staff.

Inspection team

Barnard Payne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

James Waite

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Durants School is a special school for students aged 11–19 with autistic spectrum disorder.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is high compared to the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- All Year 7 students are supported by the additional literacy and numeracy catch-up funding.
- Most students are from minority ethnic groups. Over a third are from homes where English is not the first language, which is a much higher proportion than the national average.
- The school opened a new additionally resourced provision in a mainstream secondary school in September 2013. This is run by staff from Durants School and operates as a satellite classroom. The provision accommodates eight students from Durants, who work alongside students from the mainstream school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistently outstanding academic achievement by:
 - always setting clear learning intentions in lessons so that students know precisely what they are learning
 - making sure that time in lessons is always used effectively so that rates of progress increase
 - consistently enabling students to build on what they can already do in order to progress more quickly
 - where appropriate to their ability, using marking in students' books to identify the next steps to take to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school's leaders communicate consistently high expectations and are unrelenting in their drive to make the school the best it can be. The developments since the previous inspection show that the school has the capacity to continue improving. Leadership and management are good rather than outstanding because pupils' academic achievement and the quality of teaching are good. The school's leadership has ensured outstanding behaviour and safety and an outstanding sixth form.
- The school has not stood still and has been outward-looking, successfully working with mainstream schools and the local community. This reflects the headteacher's and senior leaders' strong vision for the school as both a community resource and a leader in supporting young people on the autistic spectrum to play a full role in their local community.
- At the heart of this school is a total commitment to equality of opportunity for all of its students and the school promotes this very effectively, ensuring that no students are disadvantaged. The additionally resourced provision provides excellent opportunities for a more socially confident group of students to work within a mainstream environment.
- The school's leadership has secured consistently good teaching, which continues to improve due to a strong focus on providing staff with the professional development and support they need to develop their practice. The school has an excellent track record in enabling teaching assistants to train to become qualified teachers.
- Leaders and managers have established effective systems to track and analyse students' progress and achievement and use this information to pick up any students in danger of falling behind.
- The school's self-evaluation is also based on regular monitoring of teaching and learning, leading to effective performance management of staff, all of whom are clear about the school's high expectations.
- Middle leadership has also developed well, with a highly committed team that has received the professional development support to undertake their roles effectively.
- The school provides students with a broad curriculum and a wide range of learning experiences. There is an appropriate focus on communication, literacy and mathematics and this is a strong feature across the school. The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent; in this multicultural school, students get on well together and regularly have the opportunity to meet and work with new people.
- Students learn about different faiths, celebrate religious festivals and visit places of worship. They develop tolerance and a strong sense of right and wrong. They can participate in a variety of social settings and their attitudes will allow them to contribute positively to life in modern Britain
- By the time they are in the sixth form, they have acquired the social skills and understanding to prepare them very well for the next stage of their lives. A nearby shop, run in partnership with another school, enables students to experience a real-life retail outlet, handle money, maintain stock and deal with members of the public. This forms an innovative part of the school's highly effective programme in preparing students for their future education, training or employment.
- The school makes effective use of additional pupil premium and other funding, which is targeted at individual needs to ensure equality of opportunity. The school successfully closes the gaps in attainment between those eligible for the pupil premium and other students.
- The school has worked effectively with the local authority to establish high-quality provision for secondary-aged students on the autistic spectrum and extend it through outreach work in the local community.
- Almost all parents and carers responding to the online questionnaire have a high regard for the school and its leadership.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body effectively holds the school to account and has worked with senior leaders to set out a clear vision for the future. Key to this is the commitment to enable students to play a full role in their local communities and prepare them for life in modern Britain. The governing body monitors the work of the school effectively, is clear about the impact of teaching and has a good level of expertise in using students' progress data to track achievement. The governing body has ensured that the school has a robust staff appraisal system in place and has a clear rationale for staff salary progression aligned with performance. Governors ensure that the pupil premium and other resources are used efficiently to help students overcome barriers to learning. The governing body represents the school community very effectively, actively looking to promote the school and its values. Governors are well trained in order to undertake their role.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students across the school, including the sixth form, have excellent attitudes and this has a very strong impact on their progress.
- Given students' starting points and learning difficulties, the school enables them to make excellent progress in acquiring learning skills and meeting the staff's high expectations. Typically, students remain seated and engaged throughout the lessons. Where they find this too difficult, they acquire effective self-management strategies, such as taking some time out before returning to class.
- Students' attitudes are of a high standard across the school because staff provide very clear frameworks, guidance and expectations. For example, support staff work very closely with some students to keep them engaged and interacting, but expect them over time to show increasing levels of independence. In a sixth form lesson, while some students worked closely one-to-one with members of staff, another independently asked to use the toilet (using a communication symbol), let himself out of the classroom and returned, hanging up the key fob.
- The school does not exclude any students. This reflects not only its commitment to work with students to help them manage their own behaviour but also the effectiveness of the behaviour management strategies. There is very little disruption in lessons, and where there is any it is dealt with quickly and effectively. This enables students to feel very safe and secure.
- Attendance is good. Students enjoy school and want to be there. They make a significant contribution to its culture; by the time they are in the sixth form they have acquired strong social awareness, for example always greeting staff and apologising if they are late.
- There is no evidence of any bullying or discriminatory language. Parents and carers are very positive about behaviour and have raised no concerns about bullying. Pupils say that there is no bullying, everyone speaks nicely to each other and the school is a safe place to be.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school provides a very safe environment and meets all safeguarding requirements.
- Students learn to keep themselves safe and to deal with unexpected situations, for example when working in the school's shop. They feel safe and secure in the school's additionally resourced provision in the mainstream school and happily work and play alongside their mainstream peers.
- Parents and carers are very positive about their children feeling safe in school and being well looked after.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time has been consistently good, enabling students to achieve well. Staff have consistently high expectations of students, particularly of their behaviour and ability to use a range of ways of communicating.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively.
- Adults always create a positive climate for learning and students are interested and engaged.
- Students' work is assessed regularly and leads to individual targets for students to make further progress. Teachers evaluate progress and identify the next steps in learning. Marking in books does not set out how students are to improve their work and some more-able students would benefit from this.
- Teachers and support staff are particularly successful in breaking down barriers to learning, providing students with ways to overcome their difficulties.
- Sometimes in lessons the learning intentions are not clear enough and this restricts the amount of progress students can make. Occasionally teachers do not make the best use of the time available in order to help students make faster progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' academic achievement is good, but is not quite as impressive as their achievements in overcoming the barriers to learning caused by their autism. Taking account of their starting points students make strong progress across the range of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- Students acquire knowledge and understanding quickly. Individual case studies show how some students make rapid progress from very low starting points, for example in using writing to record and communicate.
- Students attending the additionally resourced provision make the same good rates of progress as those on the main site. In a geography lesson, they made effective use of their numeracy skills to plot grid references, and were joined by a group of peers from the mainstream school, providing an additional benefit to their social development.
- Students improve their reading using a variety of methods. A mixed Years 7 and 8 class, using tablet computers, worked on their personal reading targets, for example finding rhyming words, and sustained concentration well. Two sixth form students read fluently and had the understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) required to read some complex unfamiliar words.
- Students learn to use mathematics in different ways. In a mixed Years 10 and 11 class, students used various standard and non-standard units to take measurements. Because the work was well planned, they progressed quickly to take more complex measurements. In the school's shop, sixth form students have to deal with money in a real-life context, giving change and counting takings.
- The school has used additional funding and other resources well to close the gap in attainment between students eligible for the pupil premium and others. When comparing work by students eligible for the pupil premium with the work of other pupils there are no gaps in progress or attainment. This is also reflected in the school's own assessment data showing achievement over time.
- Students from homes where English is an additional language make good progress and achieve well. The school's use of a variety of means of communication, including the use of symbols, enables this group as well as other students to communicate and gain independence. In a life skills lesson with students in Years 9 and 10, students prepared a meal and their progress was significantly helped through the use of visual symbols.
- Students are well prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment because they acquire good functional literacy, communication and numeracy skills alongside personal and social skills. Sixth form students develop independent living skills, which include using their understanding of literacy and numeracy.
- Occasionally, achievement is limited because what students are expected to learn is not clear enough in lessons. Work samples show that while achievement over time is good, sometimes students repeat what they can already do rather than build on their previous achievements. For example, a pupil who could organise his writing into paragraphs and write fluently reverted to using simpler writing because that was what was asked of him.

The sixth form provision is outstanding

- Sixth form students' personal, social and employability skills are developed exceptionally well, preparing them for their next steps in education or work. They are very well prepared to play a full role in their communities.
- The sixth form curriculum includes units for daily living skills, healthy living and time and money management, all of which lead to external accreditation. The groupings of students take full account of their different learning needs. Some students require a more sensory-based curriculum, others a range of different experiences to respond to and some will quickly take an independent role both in school and out in the wider community.
- Students' personal development is given a great deal of emphasis, with high expectations regarding their communication and social skills. They have opportunities to consider a variety of social and moral issues; during the inspection a more able group considered 'common ground' as they recognised how their own and others' interests might overlap. A less able group learned how to separate out different materials for recycling, enabling them to make a future contribution to their communities.
- As part of the work-related learning unit, students undertake a short work-experience placement. This includes some students working in the school's shop, which is an excellent resource that enables them to gain real-life experience in a retail outlet.
- The preparation for students' transition after the age of 19 includes students making at least one visit to

the college or day centre that he or she will attend. Students take part in keeping a record of the visits, meet with some of the people they will be working with and find out about the activities they will be doing. This programme is very well planned.

- Teaching in the sixth form is excellent and leads to excellent attitudes to learning. Teaching in this part of the school leads to outstanding achievement over time for all ranges of ability. The main emphasis of the curriculum is developing students' personal and social skills and their independence. These elements are very well planned and lead to rapid progress. The leadership of the sixth form is highly effective and is based on a clearly articulated vision of what the students can achieve.

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	102066
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	447907

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sylvia Hart
Headteacher	Peter De Rosa
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 March 2012
Telephone number	020 8804 1980
Fax number	020 8804 0976
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