

Heathermount School

Devenish Road, Ascot, SL5 9PG

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by other leaders, governors and the Disabilities Trust, has successfully improved provision and outcomes for students since the previous inspection.
- Members of the governing body have received effective training so that they now regularly challenge leaders about students' progress.
- Well-planned tasks lead to students' good achievements and progress in English and mathematics. Students also make very good progress in history and in their personal development.
- All students acquire accreditation, including some GCSEs at A* to G as well as at entry levels, by the time they leave the school. Most go on to study in the sixth form or attend college.
- Students achieve well. Parents are very pleased with the school and the vast majority would recommend it to others.
- The broad range of topics and subjects meets the needs and abilities of students well. High quality enrichment through residential trips and visits help students to enjoy school. As a result they work hard and improve their skills.
- Students benefit from good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through high quality relationships with staff, students improve their personal skills and develop their confidence. This ensures that they are well prepared for their futures.
- The behaviour of all groups of students improves at the school, so that it is good. High quality support and effective behaviour management systems ensure that students learn to manage their own behaviour.
- Students show how much they value the school by their exceptionally high levels of attendance.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned to meet the individual needs of students.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of marking of students' books is too variable, so that not all students know how to improve their work.
- Students do not all receive homework to help them improve their skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed students' learning in nine lessons, many jointly with the senior leaders. The inspector also listened to some students reading during lessons.
- The inspector visited the off-site provision at the Royal Holloway University of London's Sports Centre, to observe students' activities.
- A student, based at an offsite provision at Barra Hall in Hillingdon, spoke to the inspector by telephone.
- The school council had lunch with the inspector and talked about their views.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Discussions by telephone were held with the Director of Autism, Learning Disability and Education of the Disabilities Trust, which manages the school, and with the tutor at the off-site provision in Hillingdon.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information about students' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and students' work.
- The inspectors took account of parents' responses to a recent school questionnaire because there were too few responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View). Responses from a recent school survey of staff views were also considered.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This very small school caters for students who are supported by a statement of special educational needs for their autism spectrum disorders.
- A few students also have attention deficit disorders and/or behaviour, social and emotional difficulties.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after.
- The school receives additional sport funding.
- There is off-site provision for a few sixth form students at Barra Hall Children's Centre in Hillingdon.
- The school hires an off-site sports provision at the near-by Royal Holloway London University Campus for two mornings each week.
- Vocational opportunities for older students in the sixth form take place at Sunningdale Recreation Ground.
- Students are not entered early for examinations.
- The headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body were both appointed since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and further accelerate students' progress in all lessons by:
 - improving the quality of marking so that students know how to improve their work
 - making sure that all staff set appropriate homework for each group of students.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection. Experienced leaders have been appointed and this has enabled the school to improve rapidly in all areas. Teaching is now good and sometimes outstanding. Students' good behaviour has been maintained and their achievement has improved.
- Leaders have put many new and effective procedures in place and now regularly check how well students are achieving. As a result, leaders are very aware of what is working and what needs further improvement.
- Staff support school leaders well and almost all are proud to work at the school. They are fully committed to their students and work hard to ensure that they achieve their best.
- Middle leaders are very effective in their roles. They ensure that the day to day running of the school is smooth. They say that the culture of the school has changed due to delegated leadership. This allows senior leaders to focus strongly on students' learning. As a result, students receive a good education and make at least good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- A good range of subjects meets the needs and abilities of students well. They fully enjoy the various educational experiences on offer. For example, the annual residential trip to the Brecon Beacons is a great favourite and students say that it helps them to develop confidence.
- Regular trips, such as to the theatre, and a wide range of sports contribute well to students' academic achievements, their physical skills and their personal development. This includes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students' attendance has risen rapidly in the past two years. This is because of effective rewards and sanctions. Behaviour is well managed and staff and students are fully aware of what is expected.
- Leaders have already identified the need to improve marking and are fully aware that the provision of homework is too variable.
- Opportunities offered by the school support British values and help to prepare students for life in modern Britain. Students are fully aware of their own responsibilities to society and have set up their own charity. They enjoy their vocational experiences at a local farm. These activities all help to improve their attitudes and awareness of safety.
- Leaders ensure that all groups of students meet their expected targets through rigorous monitoring. As a result, any student falling behind is provided with extra help. This enables almost all students to achieve the progress expected of them in English and mathematics, with many exceeding this.
- Leaders monitor achievement, attendance and behaviour regularly. They check those who attend off-site provision, ensuring that it is effective.
- Students benefit from good quality careers guidance and work experience. Most have high aspirations for their futures.
- Equality of opportunity is evident for all students through regular assemblies and the exciting activities offered by the curriculum. One group, for example, was learning about Hinduism. Learning about different faiths and cultures ensures that there is no discrimination.
- The school makes effective use of its additional funding to make sure that those who are eligible for this funding achieve as well as other students. They benefit from additional activities and resources to support their needs and improve their abilities.
- Almost all of the parents who responded to the school's own parent questionnaire say that their children were achieving well.
- Sport funding is used effectively to enable students to take part in activities at a high quality local sports facility at which they can experience many different sports and be part of a thriving sports provision.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are effective and meet current requirements. Training for staff is regular. Staff are well trained in identifying students at risk of harm. The school's systems to keep pupils safe are good. Risks assessments are effective and are planned for all external visits.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because leaders have not yet ensured that students make rapid and sustained progress, through, for instance, making sure that marking and homework improves.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved and now supports the school well. Members visit regularly to observe students' learning in lessons. Governors have good skills with which to support and challenge the school. They have received good quality training which equips them well to fulfil their duties.

- Governors hold leaders fully to account for students' achievements. They understand how to manage the performance of staff and know that the quality of teaching has improved. They are aware of how well students achieve and are confident that behaviour is improving.
- Members understand how well the school is doing compared with others because they are well informed about the school's performance data. They manage the budget well and use additional funding effectively to ensure that eligible students make at least the same progress as other students, and sometimes better. Governors regularly set challenging targets for senior leaders and targets for staff. They use these to ensure that the best staff are rewarded for their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. The school is calm and students understand what is expected of them. Good behaviour is evident around the school and in the playground. Behaviour targets are set and regularly reviewed to ensure that students' behaviour improves.
- Members of the school council told the inspector, 'It is a very different school now than in the past because we have targets. We are helped to manage our behaviour. There used to be bad behaviour and bullying, but this started to change a few years ago and now it is really calm.'
- The school's own information demonstrates good improvement in behaviour over time for individual students. Case studies show that students' behaviour improves rapidly once students start at the school. Short-term exclusions have decreased since the last inspection because of rigorous tracking which enables staff to check outcomes daily. This allows staff to help students improve.
- Students across the school have positive attitudes to each other as well as to staff. This is due to the high quality of training for staff in managing students' behaviour.
- High quality training for staff in managing students' behaviour ensures that the school is calm and students are able to focus on their learning.
- Older students said they know about the different forms of bullying. They explained that although there is sometimes some bullying it is very quickly dealt with. They are certain that staff will manage it well.
- Students, staff and parents all agree that students' behaviour is at least good.
- Leaders promote students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, well through strong support, curriculum activities, regular visits and visitors.
- There is a balanced approach to a broadly Christian religious education which includes other world faiths. For example, older students were observed learning about the lifestyles and beliefs of Hindus.
- Students are well prepared for life after school through their good achievements, improved behaviour and their qualifications.
- Students in the sixth form behave well in lessons and on their off-site courses.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Policies ensure that students are safe and procedures ensure their good safety and welfare.
- The vast majority of students know about risks and learn how to manage them. Students are fully aware of how to stay safe on the internet.
- Students have a good understanding of safety in the community and the school staff make sure that each student understands risk taking and how to deal with it.
- Students in the sixth form are safe and secure in their accommodation and at their alternative provision. They know how to keep themselves safe.
- High quality risk assessments are planned for school activities and all activities outside of school.
- The behaviour and safety of students attending alternative provision are well monitored.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because, just occasionally, there are some disruptions due to students' autism or behaviour difficulties that impact on the learning of others.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The vast majority of students now make good or better progress because teaching has improved. Rigorous training for staff, along with regular monitoring, has ensured that progress in most subjects is good. Progress in English and mathematics is particularly good.

- All groups, including those on the off-site provision at Barra Hall, are taught well, ensuring that their achievement is good.
- Staff have high expectations of their students. Tasks regularly challenge students to think carefully about their answers. This leads to at least good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- A new group of primary aged students has recently been established. These students have settled well and benefit from very high levels of attention and support, helping them to make a good start and achieve well.
- Students who are currently being assessed for a place at the school are well taught and share their education with students in Key Stage 2.
- Effective teaching of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that students practise and improve their skills. This ensures that they achieve well, benefit from effective support and make good progress.
- Students' books are well presented with a wide range of activities, worksheets and writing evident. These show at least good progress over time, but marking is too variable and does not always help students to improve their skills.
- Assessment of students' overall outcomes by leaders is good. It is very strong in English and mathematics where there is a clear view of each student's progress from their initial starting points.
- Those students with additional needs benefit from the good support that they receive. Teaching assistants and therapeutic approaches help them to improve their confidence. It ensures that they make at least the same amount of progress as their classmates in English and mathematics, and sometimes better.
- Behaviour in lessons is well managed, so that learning is usually calm and productive.
- The most able students are regularly challenged and benefit from the high expectations of staff. They make particularly good progress in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because not all teachers provide clear enough advice for students about how to improve their work further. They do not always make sure that students follow up this advice by applying it and showing their teachers that they have understood. Homework is not provided regularly enough to help students make even better progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is good because students come from very low starting points to catch up and acquire GCSE grades A* to G grades or other approved qualifications.
- All groups of students, including those who receive additional funding, those who have additional difficulties and the few from different ethnic backgrounds, achieve equally well.
- Despite the very small number of students in each key stage, students achieve well from their own individual starting points. This is evident in the school's own data and in students' books.
- Students' attainment in English and mathematics on entry to the school is usually very low because of their autistic spectrum disorders and associated learning or behaviour difficulties.
- Most students quickly begin to enjoy learning because of the high level of support that they receive, the appropriate tasks provided for them, and the wide range of therapies that they enjoy. These help them to start catching up. This was very evident in the Key Stage 2 class where new students, and those on assessment places, were absorbed fully in their mathematics tasks.
- Students' work and the school's data show clear evidence of good improvement over time. Students make good, and sometimes excellent, progress due to high levels of support and teaching. This was very evident in a history lesson. Older students used their literacy skills exceptionally well to read and write about events in the Vietnamese War as part of their GCSE studies.
- Achievement in communication is good. By Years 10 and 11, students express their ideas, offer opinions and talk to adults with confidence. For example, members of the school council expressed themselves clearly as they spoke to the inspector about the improvements made at the school in the past few years.
- Students in Key Stages 3 and 4 work hard to achieve their aims. They improve their reading and writing skills through regular practise and produce well presented work. However, not enough students receive homework to help them improve further.
- Students in the new Key Stage 2 class work with others who are on temporary assessment places. All of these students work happily together to improve their skills, benefiting from very high levels of support and the good role models of the older students.
- All students acquire some qualifications, such as GCSEs and/or Functional Skills, that will support them in their futures. They have effective opportunities to develop their work skills through vocational experiences such as in horticulture. All students go on to college or join the sixth form at the end of Year 11.
- Students with additional special educational needs, such as behaviour, social and emotional difficulties

and/or attention deficit disorder, receive individual help so that they can achieve as well as their classmates. They all benefit from the support and expertise that help them to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills.

- Gaps between students have been closed, so that disadvantaged students achieve as well as other students in the school.
- The most able students achieve very well in mathematics and history because of some very exciting provision and high levels of challenge in these subjects.
- The additional sport funding received by the school has ensured that students' sports skills are improving. This has enabled leaders to set up additional provision to extend students' fitness and enjoyment.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well.
- Achievement is not outstanding because students do not always know how to improve their work and the lack of homework limits their chances of improving further.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is the largest group in the school. Leaders know how well the sixth form is doing and have an accurate view of students' achievements. They know that progress is good. Most students come to the sixth form directly from the school, although occasionally students enter from other establishments.
- Teaching is well linked to students' abilities and ages. Students are able to continue their studies towards GCSEs and also other qualifications where appropriate. They learn to improve their information and communication technology skills and benefit from good quality employability skills training.
- Courses match students' abilities and needs well. This includes the abilities of students based in the off-site provision at Barra Hall. Skills are effectively assessed through the school's tracking system so that leaders have a clear view of their progress.
- Staff guide and support students very well. Relationships are strong. Students are well cared for and provided with high quality individual help where needed. Students know that there is always someone to talk to.
- Students learn about the wider world through their good quality curriculum. The wide range of additional opportunities enables them to acquire skills, such as confidence, self-esteem and travel skills, that will benefit them in their futures.
- Students have regular daily tasks that promote their good achievements in English and mathematics. For example, they read and write menus, shop for ingredients, weigh and estimate amounts. Students in the sixth form regularly go on to college or take up vocational opportunities.
- Students based off site receive the same good quality provision and achieve equally as well as those on the main site.
- Sixth form students behave well and set an example to the rest of the school. The curriculum is very relevant and all students acquire some accreditation. Opportunities to learn about the wider world are very good. For example students have opportunities to study for their driving theory test and start some practical driving, preparing them well for the future. They have their own common room which supports their independence.
- Vocational opportunities help to improve students' confidence and self-esteem.
- The sixth form is not outstanding because the lack of homework limits opportunities for students to make even better progress.

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	133743
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	453423

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Jackman
Headteacher	Ruth Bovill
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2013
Telephone number	01344875101
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