

Brantridge School

Staplefield Place, Haywards Heath, RH17 6EQ

Inspection dates

22–23 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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection. They have put in place effective monitoring systems, which track both teaching and the progress pupils make, and as a result pupils' achievement is now good.
- Pupils enjoy school and make good progress across different subjects. Pupils feel safe and say that they are well looked after. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the different risks they face in modern life and how they should respond to them.
- Behaviour is good in classes and around the school. Pupils respond positively to the range of activities planned for them.
- Teaching is good. Teachers assess pupils' work systematically and give them good guidance on what they need to improve. This helps pupils to stay focused and to try their best.
- Staff support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in lessons, in additional activities in breaks and after school and in an extensive range of school visits.
- Pupils say they feel safe, and their behaviour and attendance improves while they are at the school. They also develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Leadership is good, including the more effective governing body. As a result, leaders have had a good impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- In some lessons pupils' learning slows as the work is not sufficiently challenging and pupils do not reflect sufficiently on how well they have progressed and what else they need to do.
- Middle leaders have not developed their links with other schools sufficiently to help them share best practice and do not have sufficient impact on improving teaching in the areas for which they have responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons and was accompanied during a number of these observations by one of the school's senior leaders.
- The inspector had discussions with groups of pupils of different ages.
- The inspector heard pupils read, both in meetings and during their lessons.
- Discussions were held with the Trust's Chief Executive Officer, two of the school's governors, the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, and with the chair of the parents' forum.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of school documentation relating to safeguarding, examples of minutes of governors' meetings, information relating to the behaviour and attendance of pupils and information relating to the progress made by pupils in all year groups and the quality of teaching they receive.
- The inspector took account of the response of 19 parents and carers to Parent View, the online questionnaire. The inspector also took account of a recent school pupil survey and the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Timothy Feast, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brantridge School is a school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and for pupils on the autistic spectrum continuum.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs; two thirds are identified as having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and a third of pupils are diagnosed as on the autistic spectrum continuum.
- The proportion of the pupils eligible for the pupil premium is about three quarters of the school population, which is much higher compared with national figures. This extra government funding supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and/or looked after children.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average. However the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average when compared with national figures.
- No pupils access alternative provision.
- There is residential provision for nearly half of the pupils, but this provision did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is typically outstanding by ensuring that pupils tackle more challenging activities and reflect more frequently in lessons on the progress they are making.
- Increase the effectiveness of middle leaders further; bsenior leaders should:
 - support them in establishing productive links with other schools so that best practice can be shared
 - develop middle leaders' capacity to review the teaching in the areas for which they are responsible and to use this information to continue to improve the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Following the last inspection there have been significant changes to the senior leadership team and to the way that the governing body operates. As a result the leadership team now effectively leads and manages and the governing body challenges and supports them well. Leaders identified that they have been on a 'journey of change', resulting in a sustained climate for improvement and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching has improved and, with it, pupils' achievement and their attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is systematically reviewed and leaders have used this information to improve substantially the quality of teaching. Any staff underperformance is rigorously tackled and procedures for managing the performance of staff are well linked to both improving teaching and to salary progression. The school's extensive programme of training takes in to consideration both the needs of individual staff and the priorities of the school as a whole.
- Middle leaders have made effective changes to the school's curriculum reflecting new national guidance. They are very clear as to the implications of these changes to the school's assessment practices from changes nationally. They have too few opportunities to monitor teaching in their areas of responsibility and to use that information to improve teaching further. They have begun to establish links with local schools to share best practice but the impact of this work is not yet sufficiently evident.
- School leaders accurately assess the school's effectiveness. They test their assessments against what schools are achieving nationally. Their expectations are high as to the progress that the pupils should make. Their ambitions have helped to accelerate pupils' progress and to narrow the gap with the performance of pupils nationally since the last inspection. This progress has been helped by the more effective use of specialists such as speech, language and communication therapists and occupational therapists in meeting the pupils' specific needs.
- The school offers a broad range of subjects. These learning opportunities are supplemented both through the additional activities taken by all pupils after school and by regular visits to places of interest, both in this country and abroad. Pupils value these visits and they help not only to develop their personal qualities but also a good understanding of life in Britain and further afield.
- The school uses additional funding provided by the government well. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress as a result of the well-targeted support they receive. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide one-to-one support in both English and mathematics.
- The primary school physical education and sports premium has been used to extend the range of sporting activities to include sports such as golf and archery. Pupils indicated how much they like sport and physical education lessons and they have a good understanding of why exercise helps people to stay healthy.
- The school provides older pupils with appropriate guidance on the requirements of different occupations and through the annual review process helps them to make informed choices about their next steps in learning.
- The school values all pupils and effectively promotes equal opportunities through its good teaching and its systematic monitoring of pupils' progress so that all progress well. Pupils are clear that discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated and say that the school treats them all fairly.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met and the school's procedures keep pupils safe. Staff receive good training on strategies to be used when pupils require handling and pupils indicated that when necessary this is done well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have had a school improvement sub-committee which has been in operation since the last inspection. Through its work and the work of the full board and other sub-committees, governors have an accurate and comprehensive view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement, based on comprehensive data on the school's performance. This knowledge helps underpin their high ambitions for the school.
 - Governors take part in an extensive training programme, and supplement their knowledge by visits to the school. They provide school leaders with effective challenge and support. They have clear plans as to the direction in which they want the school to go.
 - Governors keep a tight watch on the school's budget. They monitor the use of various external funds to the school, checking the impact on teaching and the results they produce.
 - Governors are appropriately involved in the management of teaching performance, checking actions taken to tackle underperformance and using the information to reward good performance appropriately.
 - Governance has improved rapidly since the last inspection and governors now demonstrate a good

capacity to challenge and support the school to bring about further improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show tolerance towards others who have more obvious difficulties than themselves. They respect the learning environment, treating their own work and the work of others with respect. They play well together as shown by their enthusiastic but fair games of football at break times.
- Due to the nature of the pupils' disabilities, there are occasional difficulties. These are dealt with effectively by staff and have very limited impact on the learning of others. Pupils feel that their behaviour improves while they are at the school and this is confirmed by the views of parents and carers. Pupils feel that there is a little bullying at school, mainly name calling. They think that staff deal with any incidents well.
- The school's information on pupils' behaviour shows a decrease in behavioural incidents over time and pupils responding well to the rewards for positive behaviour. The number of exclusions is very small and none have been permanent. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively, for example, school lunchtime is a good social occasion. Pupils react respectfully to the saying of grace at the beginning and end of the meal.
- Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes in their lessons and towards activities outside the classroom. Older pupils work well collaboratively; for example, in devising a fair test to assess a liquid's acidity.
- Pupils attend well, most improving their rate of attendance while at the school.
- Staff, in their responses to the questionnaire, were positive about pupils' behaviour. The parents and carers in their response to the online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the improvement in their child's behaviour. One interviewed indicated that her children are given opportunities that they had not had in their mainstream primary school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff, pupils and parents and carers were all clear that Brantridge is a safe environment in which pupils can learn. Pupils told the inspector that they were well cared for by the staff and they could go to an adult if they had a problem and they would sort it.
- The school's procedures are well implemented to keep pupils safe. Health and safety requirements are well met in subjects such as science and technology. Pupils have a good understanding of what risks they face and actions they need to take to minimise the risks, for example, when using the internet.
- Pupils are prepared well for their lives in both modern Britain and the wider world.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan activities which meet the specific needs of the pupils. There is a good focus on improving the pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and communication and activities which develop pupils' social skills, like taking turns and listening carefully to others.
- Teachers use other adults in the classroom well to extend pupils' learning and to keep them on task where necessary.
- Sometimes the activities do not challenge the pupils sufficiently and this restricts the progress the pupils make in the lesson.
- Teachers mark pupils' work systematically and provide pupils with good guidance on what they need to do next to improve. This guidance helps pupils to make good progress. However, this is not always the case and some pupils do not always reflect on their own learning and the learning of others.
- The teaching of reading is good and, coupled with the frequent opportunities for pupils to read, helps them to progress well and to read more widely.
- There has been a considerable focus on improving pupils' writing since September 2014. Teachers follow a commercial scheme very carefully and the opportunities for pupils to produce extended writing in all classes have increased considerably to good effect.
- The good progress pupils make in mathematics reflects the good quality of the teaching and the regular opportunities to apply mathematical skills to real-life problems. Pupils are very positive about their mathematics lessons and this is reflected in the quality of work in their books.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From starting points usually below those typical for their age , pupils across the school make good progress in their reading, writing, mathematical and communication skills.
- Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties make good progress in line with those pupils on the autistic spectrum continuum.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who have English as an additional language progress as well as their peers in the school.
- Traditionally, residential pupils have made better progress than day pupils. Changes to the policy of providing homework and to day pupils staying until at least 5 o'clock and taking part in the enrichment activities have meant that the progress of both groups of pupils is now very similar.
- Progress is similar for both primary-age and secondary-age pupils.
- The small number of most able pupils progress well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Occasionally there is insufficient challenge in the activities in lessons and on these occasions progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics and, depending on their starting points, sometimes outperform their peers in national tests. They are well supported through one-to-one tuition in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are regularly engaged in their learning and this helps them to progress at a good rate and narrow the gap with age-related expectations. This was seen in a number of lessons focused on improving pupils' writing. Younger pupils particularly enjoyed writing about the 'Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig'.
- Pupils with poor handwriting benefit from sessions with the occupational therapist and improvement in their presentation in books is noticeable.
- Good use is made of activities outside the classroom to develop skills which will equip pupils well for their future lives. There is a planned purpose to all these activities, for example, to help pupils develop their capacity to follow instructions, improve their teamwork and to improve their communication to and with others.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the progress their children make in both their academic and personal development. Pupils think that they make good progress at the school and they have suitably high aspirations for what they want to do later in life.

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	134063
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	453443

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	6–13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Livesley
Headteacher	Mrs Gina Wagland
Date of previous school inspection	31 January–1 February 2013
Telephone number	01444 400228
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