

Notton House School

28 Notton, Chippenham, SN15 2NF

Inspection dates 3–4 February 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.

- Pupils who may have experienced interruptions to their education settle and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is a steady increase over the last two years in the number and quality of qualifications that Year 11 pupils gain.
- Pupils know that they are safe at school and speak of how recent improvements to the building have helped this.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that staff have helped them understand and manage their behaviour so that they can succeed in learning.
- Teachers and support staff know pupils well. They are highly skilled and knowledgeable about how to adapt work and provide challenge to motivate pupils in lessons.
- There have been rapid and highly effective improvements to teaching since the arrival of the executive headteacher. The school has also benefited from forming a partnership with another special school.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of what everyone in the school community can achieve. There are good relationships throughout.
- The headteacher and senior leaders, including the governing body, have taken good decisions to improve the quality of leadership and teaching and to make rapid improvements to the building.
- Governors know that teaching is good and that this is resulting in pupils achieving well.
- The few pupils in the recently introduced sixth form are making good progress. Their attendance and participation in education are improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The overall quality of teaching is not outstanding. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to find out things for themselves.
- Sometimes pupils do not have time to correct their work soon after it has been marked.
- Some teachers have not yet adopted the best practice in full.
- Leaders and managers have not yet improved the range of qualifications on offer so that pupils can achieve at their full potential, particularly in some practical subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 11 lessons; 10 of these were jointly observed with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. The team reviewed samples of pupils' work in books to check their progress.
- A member of the team visited the alternative provision, observed lessons, had a meeting with a middle leader and a carer and held discussions with pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, middle leaders, support staff, the educational psychologist and speech therapist, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other member and several pupils. The lead inspector had a meeting with two representatives from the local authority.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) to be considered. However, the team took account of a recent survey of parents undertaken by the school and a letter from a carer. The team analysed the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at school documents, including information relating to checks on pupils' progress, plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, the minutes of the governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- The residential provision was not part of this inspection; it was last inspected, separately, on the 19 June 2014.

Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Lyon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils are boys and have a statement of special educational needs for emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The school provides residential provision during the week for 38 weeks of the year.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has had an acting headteacher for the academic year 2013–14. In September 2014 a partnership was formed with Knowle DGE Learning Centre in Bristol. These two schools now share the same executive headteacher. The governing body has been reconstituted.
- The school uses alternative provision from three providers: Education First; Rocksteady; and Bristol City Council; at a site in Bristol city centre. Six pupils currently attend.
- There is a new sixth form which currently has three students. All of these students currently attend the alternative provision.
- One third of the teaching staff are new since September 2014.
- About three quarters of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority). Very few pupils in Year 11 are eligible for this.
- A fifth of pupils are in the care of a local authority. Almost all pupils come from the City of Bristol, but a few are placed by neighbouring authorities.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the range of qualifications on offer so that pupils can achieve at higher levels, particularly in practical subjects.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to work by themselves
 - pupils can make a more timely response to the marking of their work to accelerate their progress
 - the best practice in teaching is fully implemented in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new executive headteacher and the school's partnership work have had a good impact on all aspects of the school's work, leading to improvements in teaching and learning, the school building and pupils' behaviour and safety.
- Teaching is good because leaders have made sure that there are clear expectations of what is required in lessons. Leaders have ensured there is a consistent system that enables them to track pupils' progress well. This results in clear accountability for pupils' progress.
- The headteacher manages the performance of teachers effectively. There is no inadequate teaching. Teachers' pay is related to how well pupils make progress and teachers' contribution to the work of the school.
- Experienced teachers have been given new middle management responsibilities in each key stage. This enables them to use their expertise well, with their colleagues, to continue to improve pupils' achievement. There are good systems for gathering all of the information about a pupil so that staff can plan the precise programme to fill the gaps in pupils' learning and provide the therapies that pupils need. Communication between all staff has improved.
- Leaders and managers have made sure that staff are trained well to meet pupils' individual special educational needs. Regular training and meetings between staff, the speech therapist and educational psychologist contribute to a good level of specialist knowledge and multi-agency working.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to provide speech and language support, specific reading support and careers advice for eligible pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils succeed as well as their peers. Equality of opportunity is promoted very effectively across the school.
- The residential and educational aspects of the school are now closely linked. There is excellent handover at the start and end of each day. It also means that rewards and consequences are clear across both parts of the school and staff consistently apply these.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. The school teaches about British values, including tolerance of, and respect for, different faiths and cultures. It ensures this is also the case for its own community, where there are pupils and staff from different backgrounds.
- Leaders and managers make sure that there is flexibility in what the school provides to meet both the complex needs and interests of pupils. This means that they can stay in education and be more effectively prepared for the transition to further training, education or work. Pupils are given good advice and support so that they can move on successfully after leaving the school.
- The school checks pupils' attendance, behaviour and participation in the alternative provision because members of staff are there with the pupils every day. Bespoke courses are well designed for each individual pupil in the sixth form currently attending the alternative provision.
- Overall, the school offers a good range of subjects. However, sometimes the accredited courses on offer are not at a high enough level for pupils' capabilities, especially in some practical subjects, and this can limit pupils' achievement. There is a wide range of activities available for pupils after the school day, complementing their academic subjects and contributing well to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The roles of day care staff from the residential provision have been restructured so that there is consistency in the management of behaviour of pupils who may need to spend time outside the classroom. Pupils say that this is working well. There is a rigorous system for leaders and managers to check exactly how behaviour is managed so that systems are consistent and working well across the school.
- The school works well with parents and carers. When the new behaviour management systems were introduced, the headteacher had an interview with each pupil and their parent or carer to explain the procedures and make sure everyone understood. Parents and carers speak highly of the way the school meets pupils' individual needs, particularly when their child has had difficult experiences in other settings.
- There are good arrangements for transition to the school. These are effective for pupils who have had interruptions to their education, and families are supported well.
- The school has good partnerships with local primary schools so that pupils can develop sports leadership skills. It is also beginning to provide training activities for a wider partnership of special schools so that expertise can be shared effectively.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. The school has rigorous safeguarding procedures; any concerns are quickly communicated to social care and followed up so that action can be taken.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school since its last inspection and has helped form

the partnership as part of its plan for improving special school provision in the area.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good range of skills from business and education and all members of the governing body are fully involved in effectively holding the school to account. They receive accurate reports from the headteacher and check the work of the school through regular visits. They use the data on the school well, particularly to make sure that pupils' achievement is improving further, and are aware of how well the school is performing. They know that the quality of teaching is good and are aware of the actions taken to tackle any underperformance. Governors manage the performance of the headteacher well.
- The governors are working in an effective partnership with the local authority to ensure financial stability and the future of the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and apply themselves well to tasks in lessons. A point's reward system is consistently applied and pupils understand that poor behaviour results in them not achieving the end of term trip.
- Staff manage behaviour in lessons well. If a pupil does start to disrupt the learning of others there is an effective, consistent response system that is well organised through the designated behaviour support staff team. If pupils present poor behaviour the consequences help them make suitable reparation to the whole school community.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying and it is swiftly dealt with by staff. There is a strong community and all its members have respect for each other. There is equality of opportunity and no discrimination.
- Pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour show marked improvements over time because of the good quality support they are given. This includes individual support after incidents and careful checking of triggers by staff so that incidents can be minimised. Pupils say that they have learnt how to control their anger.
- Fixed term exclusions are used appropriately and apply to a decreasing proportion of pupils. Permanent exclusions are extremely rare.
- Any absence after the weekend is followed up rigorously and the attendance of those older pupils who have been persistently absent is improving at the alternative provision. The school works well with the education welfare officer for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Members of school staff are always at the alternative provision so they can make sure that pupils' behaviour there is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are safe at the school and at the alternative provision.
- Pupils know there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns.
- Pupils know how to evaluate risk in practical subjects and take suitable precautions when using equipment.
- Staff carry out risk assessments and are trained well for any physical interventions that might be necessary, for individual pupils, to keep everyone safe. The school has an excellent system for continually checking any use of these systems.
- Pupils say that they feel much safer now because of the recent changes to the building, including new doors, electronic lock controls and cameras.
- They know how to stay safe on the internet and know how filters work when they are online.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use information on students' abilities accurately to plan work for each individual pupil so that they can make good progress in lessons. They understand pupils' learning needs well, especially their literacy difficulties, and materials are adjusted appropriately.
- Specific work is planned and delivered for pupils to catch up with reading and they are given opportunities to demonstrate their developing reading skills in lessons.

- Mathematics skills are taught well and pupils learn to apply their calculation skills to a range of problems.
- There are excellent relationships within class teaching teams and teaching assistants contribute strongly to the quality of learning in lessons. Staff are highly skilled at providing the right level of challenge in each lesson for each individual because they know them so well.
- Staff use questioning well to gauge understanding and quickly modify tasks so that progress can be accelerated in the lesson. However, at times, pupils are not given enough opportunities to work on their own and challenge themselves to learn more.
- Teachers modify presentation and support materials well to make it easier for individual pupils to learn well. The majority of the pupils learn best from visual presentation and this is used in all aspects of teaching. For example, the marking policy clearly represents how pupils have succeeded and what they need to do to improve.
- The marking policy is used consistently to make sure pupils know how to improve their work. Sometimes they are not given the chance to review teachers' guidance soon enough after their work has been marked.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are trained well to meet the communication needs of the pupils. There is good training provided by the speech therapist and detailed reports on individual pupils needs so that teachers can ensure they are using the best methods to communicate and promote learning.
- Homework is used well to reinforce learning in lessons and pupils receive support from care staff to do this.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All groups of pupils make good progress, especially in catching up in reading and writing when they have had gaps in their education. Reading skills are used well by older pupils for research. Younger pupils are beginning to write for different purposes and older pupils can use their imagination well in writing stories.
- Individual pupils' needs, especially when resulting from emotional damage, are well met and an effective transition to learning is made, particularly for younger pupils. Pupils gain in confidence as they move through the school and are supported well to begin to take responsibility for their futures.
- Pupils make good progress with communication skills. They become increasingly articulate and some also find new ways of expressing themselves, through creative subjects. Those with particular difficulties with communication are supported well because all staff understand the best strategies for each individual.
- There is no gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups make equally good progress at this school. There are individual examples of remarkable achievements of pupils, including those that are looked after by local authorities.
- Pupils who are preparing to leave have good aspirations of what they will do and the school helps each pupil to achieve to their potential. They are making particularly good progress in science, for example, and being challenged to obtain higher level qualifications. Early entry to GCSE is rarely used, but when this is the case it enhances the ability of the more able pupils to increase their qualifications.
- Pupils who are attending the alternative provision make good progress. Courses are designed to ensure individuals can gain qualifications in English, mathematics and practical subjects, as well as receive the therapy they need.
- The most able pupils make good progress because work is set at the right level of difficulty for them.
- Innovative approaches for house-based independent living have been introduced for older pupils, to enable them to take responsibility for their food, washing and cleaning, to make a smooth transition to further training or work.

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	109394
Social care unique reference number	SC039112
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	451015

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	9–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	3
Number of boarders on roll	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Marr
Headteacher	Peter Evans
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 November 2012
Telephone number	01249730407
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