

Reynalds Cross School

Kineton Green Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7ER

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

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
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team and governing body, has created a committed atmosphere for further improvement. Together, they have improved the quality of teaching, which is consistently good.
- The governing body has improved markedly since the last inspection, both in challenging and supporting the senior leadership effectively.
- Teachers have successfully used the new national curriculum to make learning fun and relevant to the pupils' lives. They ensure that pupils' personal, social and physical development is central to all that they do.
- The senior leadership team ensures that the subjects taught are well planned and match the pupils' needs. This prepares them well for their future lives.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and staff help them overcome their behavioural difficulties. Pupils, parents and staff rightly feel behaviour is outstanding.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is excellent. Pupils, parents and staff all feel safe and that the school is a pleasant and safe environment.
- Pupils across all areas of the school make good progress in English and mathematics. They make excellent progress in their language and communication skills.
- The early years successfully stimulates children's learning and prepares them well for their future education.
- The sixth form provision provides effective learning, due to good teaching and a rapidly improving curriculum.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently record pupils' progress in reading, resulting in inconsistencies in approach across the school.
- While monitoring and tracking systems are very detailed, the senior leadership team does not have an easily accessible overview of the school to enable improvements to be made at a faster rate.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed a range of subjects across the school. The inspectors were joined in these observations by various members of the senior and middle leadership team.
- The inspection team heard a number of pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, the lead teacher of the sixth form, a representative from the local authority and with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. The inspection team also held meetings with several groups of pupils, and talked to pupils during their lessons and at break times.
- The inspection team took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View; an email from a parent; the results of a recent school survey; and the 36 responses to the staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation relating to the progress and attainment of pupils, the work the school does to keep pupils safe, and records regarding the quality of teaching. Other documentation scrutinised related to pupils' behaviour and attendance. Evidence relating to the use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the use of the pupil premium was also examined.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Reynolds Cross School is a special school for pupils aged two to 19 years with severe cognitive learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, physical difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. The proportion of pupils with extreme behavioural difficulties is rising rapidly.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs for severe learning difficulties, including speech and language difficulties and/or autistic spectrum disorders.
- The school has a larger than average number of pupils who enter and leave the school other than at the usual times.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is approximately one in four of the school population, which is a little above average. These pupils are supported through the pupil premium, which is the additional funding provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The next largest group are Asian, who account for just over a quarter of the school population, which is above average. Pupils with English as an additional language account for approximately one in every seventeen pupils.
- Children in the early years attend full time.
- There is a sixth form provision catering for students aged 16–19 years.
- The school shares its site with a local secondary school.
- The school uses Solihull College and Hereward College, Coventry, to provide external learning experiences for its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers consistently record pupils' progress in reading and so enable greater continuity of progress across the school.
- Raise the quality of leadership and management further by ensuring that monitoring and tracking systems provide an easily accessible overview of each aspect of the school to enable improvements to be made even quicker.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and all teachers have high expectations of each and every pupil. This helps to ensure that the school provides a good level of education. All areas for improvement in the last inspection have been addressed, demonstrating the school has the capacity to improve further. Leaders are working closely with other special schools and the local authority in designing their assessments without national curriculum levels. They are currently using a system based on the early years profile; this is providing an accurate view of pupils' achievement across the school.
- The senior leadership team has been pro-active in using the excellent links it has with the local authority to ensure that the school improves. Together they have created a positive drive for improvement. The local authority has moderated all aspects of the school's work. This has helped to ensure that the senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This includes ensuring that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- The governing body and senior leadership team consistently make sure that all pupils can and do engage in all aspects of school life. There is no discrimination and all leaders and managers monitor this effectively. For example, those pupils with English as an additional language are well catered for, so ensuring their progress is in line with that of their peers in school. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are supported very effectively and also achieve as well as their peers in school. This is due to the extra support they receive in small group or one-to-one situations.
- The leadership and management of teaching are good, resulting in consistently good teaching across the school. There is an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching and this has helped to make sure that all pupils make good progress. Several of the support staff have been assisted in developing their skills to a high level, including attaining qualified teacher status.
- The leadership and management team has created effective monitoring and tracking systems. These provide a wealth of information on all aspects of pupils' progress and other aspects of school improvement. However, the senior leadership team does not currently have an easily accessible overview of the school. This means that, occasionally, areas for improvement are not picked up and improved as quickly as other areas, for example the inconsistencies in recording the progress pupils make in reading.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good, leading to good teaching and children making good levels of progress across all areas of learning. Leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent and have secured good or better teaching. There is a rapidly improving curriculum, leading to a wider range of qualifications and higher achievement.
- The school effectively uses external careers guidance and support to ensure that pupils can make informed choices about their next steps in learning. This sets them up well for their future lives.
- The work of the school's middle leaders is good. Although relatively new in their roles, they have supported the positive improvements in the school effectively. They monitor teaching well, carry out regular scrutiny of pupils' work, and use the information they have on pupils' progress to successfully ensure they all achieve well.
- The range of subjects taught in the school and the methods of delivery are based on the new national primary curriculum. They have enabled pupils to engage in their learning much more, which they feel is fun. As one pupil stated, 'I like learning - the subjects are fun.' The school rightly focuses on the pupils' language and communication skills, and all staff provide a range of opportunities to develop these skills. All of this ensures that pupils are prepared for their next stage of their lives.
- The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively, and provides a range of learning opportunities on various faiths and cultures. The work they do with pupils around British democratic systems and social values is excellent. The sixth form students have, for example, taken part in a number of local council social campaigns; they have participated in student

council elections and been involved in a number of charity events. Positive values, politeness and understanding of others are all paramount at Reynolds Cross School. This means that pupils have a good understanding of British values and living in a British society.

- The leadership team make effective use of the pupil premium funding. It has been used to provide further training for staff and so improve the quality of teaching that disadvantaged pupils receive. Further resources have been provided, and these actions have resulted in these pupils making good progress and closing the gaps on their peers in school.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding has been used to rapidly improve the quality of teaching in this area. As a result, pupils are far more engaged in sporting activities. This is well exemplified by pupils' enthusiastic participation in Sunday swimming sessions.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved rapidly since the last inspection. It has used further training to ensure that members robustly challenge and support the leadership team. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how the pupils' achievement compares to others nationally. They use the information they collect on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching to ensure that performance management systems are effective. This is then used to reward positive teaching, and also to ensure that any underachievement is quickly rectified.
 - Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively and all safeguarding aspects meet current requirements. They monitor all finances well and check that they are producing positive results.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils across the school have very positive attitudes to learning, which has helped ensure that they make good progress. Around the school pupils work together very successfully, socialise well during lunch times and play together very happily at break times. In the sixth form, students socialise together well. Having their own base area means that they can relax with each other in a suitable environment.
- Even though the number of pupils with extreme behavioural difficulties has risen sharply, pupils, parents and staff rightly feel behaviour is outstanding. When incidents do occur, they are very effectively managed. Logs are fully completed and show a fall in the number of incidents in the school.
- Those pupils and sixth form students who have behavioural difficulties quickly learn to manage their behaviour and so take a more positive role in their learning. This is especially so for the older students as their behaviour in their college placements is very positive.
- Staff are excellent role models and this is reciprocated by the pupils and students across all aspects of school life. This starts in the early years where children's behaviour rapidly becomes very positive and assists in their positive start to their education.
- Due to the high number of pupils with serious medical issues, attendance has fallen over the past year. At the same time, the school has been successful in reducing the number of absences for other reasons.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Excellent routines, caring staff and very effectively developed policies and procedures are carefully followed. The early years provides a positive start to ensuring children are kept safe and this is successfully built upon as pupils move through the school.
- The school carries out thorough checks on all staff and visitors to the school, ensuring that all are appropriately assessed for their suitability to work with children. Teachers ensure that all pupils know how

to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.

- Pupils and sixth form students all understand the various types of bullying. In discussion, they were clear that this did not happen in their school.
- All risk assessments are very effectively maintained and developed to ensure the safety of all pupils at all times. Detailed assessments are made for pupils taking part in off-site visits and for sixth form students attending college placements.
- Sixth form students are well monitored when they attend their college placements. All the students are taught how to be safe when using the internet and how to stay safe in their everyday lives.
- All staff are trained at an appropriate level in child protection procedures, as are members of the governing body. In addition to the designated person completing the required higher level training, several members of staff and a number of governors have also undertaken enhanced training.
- The school works closely with the local authority in developing appropriate child protection systems for other similar schools.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good leadership and management of teaching has ensured consistently good teaching over time. Work scrutiny and a review of books across the school confirm that pupils' progress over time has been good. Staff training has raised the level of teachers' skills and subject knowledge. Good teaching in English and mathematics enables all pupils to make at least good progress.
- All staff have high expectations and all groups of pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and/or abilities, are challenged well. They develop the pupils' language and communication skills through the routine use of a range of symbols, pictures, electronic communication aids and signing. Staff also model highly positive oral language very effectively.
- Staff have excellent relationships with a range of specialists to help support their planning to meet the needs of their pupils. Speech therapists, physiotherapists and other medical specialists all effectively support the development of every pupil in the school.
- The teaching of reading has improved very quickly, resulting in rapidly rising achievement in this area. This was clearly seen during a geography lesson in which the teacher developed reading skills throughout, ensuring that pupils could pronounce letter sounds effectively and build words correctly. However, teachers throughout the school do not consistently record pupils' progress in reading, causing an uneven approach across the school.
- The other adults who support learning are used well by staff and their support enables all groups of pupils to enjoy their learning. They encourage pupils, challenge them to do their best and help them maintain their concentration. This is especially so for minority ethnic group pupils and those with English as an additional language.
- Teachers challenge the more-able pupils in all their lessons and this has resulted in them making rapid progress in English and mathematics. For example, in a mathematics lesson on sequencing, staff concentrated on number sequences to five. However, the more-able pupils were challenged to go beyond this and clearly enjoyed this challenge.
- All staff use excellent questioning skills to help pupils develop their learning. Their discussion skills tease out pupils' ideas and views, and this in turn further develops language and communication skills. All staff provide good verbal and, where appropriate, written feedback on pupils' learning. This is especially so in the sixth form where students use this information to help improve their work.

- Teaching in the sixth form and early years is good. In the sixth form it is increasingly outstanding.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are typically well below those expected for their ages. Pupils who enter the school at other times also enter the school with attainment below that for their ages.
- Due to good teaching, students in the sixth form make good progress in English and mathematics, and in their personal, social, language, communication and behavioural skills. Some students are making even better progress and so the school meets their needs well.
- Progress in language and communication skills for all pupils is excellent. This is due to the excellent use of a wide range of communication systems which enable pupils to communicate with each other and adults alike.
- There are no variations between the different groups in the school. Minority ethnic groups make good progress in line with that of their peers in school in reading, writing and mathematics, as do those pupils with English as an additional language. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and have completely closed the gaps with their peers in school in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 7 are well supported through the extra funding they receive, which helps to ensure that their good progress is maintained and developed.
- More-able pupils make good progress across the school. Some of these pupils make outstanding progress due to the excellent level of challenge provided by teachers during lessons, and so achieve above similar pupils nationally.
- The school caters successfully for those pupils with the most severe learning difficulties. These pupils achieve well as learning is carried out in the smallest of steps. Each step is reinforced and enhanced to ensure that each pupil fully understands and makes good progress. This was well demonstrated in a science lesson on materials in which the pupils experienced a range of materials and their textures. Staff ensured that subject language was effectively used and pupils knew the characteristics of the various materials.

The early years provision is good

- The early years is well led and managed, leading to good teaching and rising achievement. The staff make sure that each child has an individualised learning programme. The development of social skills is a priority, as are language and communication skills.
- The development of the children's physical skills is carefully planned in conjunction with medical specialists. Activities in the indoor and outdoor areas provide opportunities for the children to practise their skills.
- Teaching is good and each session is well planned. All staff are fully aware of each child's needs and abilities and this means they can support each individual's learning. Learning journals confirm that over time the children are making good progress.
- Monitoring and tracking systems are robust. They are used effectively to enable staff to plan future learning and ensure that good progress is continuous.
- The whole provision is a bright and engaging environment, which stimulates children's learning. Both the indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and used by staff to fully engage children in their learning. This results in good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.

- Activities to develop the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development make sure that children know how to behave, socialise with each other and understand right from wrong. They work and play with each other, take turns and sit and listen to adults and each other. At lunch time, where appropriate, they feed themselves.
- Welfare arrangements and good routines help support the good safeguarding arrangements in the provision. These meet current requirements.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is extremely well led and this has resulted in an improved range of subjects and a higher number of qualifications being achieved. Due to good teaching, students effectively develop their social, personal and workability skills. The provision is leading several local authority initiatives in developing the 14–19 curriculum.
- Achievement in the sixth form is rising rapidly due to a wider range of subjects and qualifications available. This includes ASDAN and Entry Level 1 and 2 qualifications in life and work-based skills. College placements provide transitional experiences and so help prepare the students for their future lives. However, it is not yet outstanding as the new subjects and qualifications have not had time to raise achievement to outstanding.
- The regular college placements, links with the local council and a range of work placements all help students prepare well for their future lives. They develop good social awareness and a keen understanding of British values. They have planned various charity events and taken part in several community council campaigns.
- The subjects taught are rightly focused on developing life skills. The school's house provides opportunities for them to practise daily living skills and has also provided them with opportunities to operate, for example, as a bed and breakfast for sixth form students. This work helped to provide good supporting evidence for external accreditation in workability skills.
- Students' language and communication development is a key aspect of the sixth form provision. Staff ensure that students are always challenged to use their language and communication skills to the highest levels possible. Staff model good oral and written structures to ensure that students have a language-rich environment.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and increasingly outstanding. This leads to very positive attitudes to learning resulting in good achievement.
- Behaviour is good and the students' social skills are well developed. These spill out into their college placements where they are very well thought of by the staff and other students. All safeguarding aspects meet current requirements, and all risk assessments for their activities are highly detailed and effective.

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	104131
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	449514

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	103
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charlotte Vale
Headteacher	Jane Davenport
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2012
Telephone number	0121 7073012
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