

Icknield School

River Way, Andover, SP11 6LT

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Exceptional leadership by the headteacher, very ably supported by the governing body and other leaders and staff, has improved teaching and achievement for all students in the past three years.
- The governing body has received rigorous training so that it is now able to challenge leaders about their decisions and about students' progress.
- A rich range of activities ensures that all groups of students achieve outstandingly well in English, mathematics and science. Students also make excellent progress in art and in their personal development.
- Children in the early years provision get off to a good start and achieve well.
- All students acquire some accreditation by the time they leave the school. Almost all go on to study in the sixth form.
- Students across the school make outstanding progress. Parents are very pleased with the school and the vast majority would recommend it to others.
- The broad range of subjects and topics meets students' needs and abilities extremely well. A very high quality curriculum which includes residential visits, links with schools at home and abroad, and local visits, help students to really enjoy school. As a result, they attend regularly and work hard.
- Students benefit from outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through high quality links with many schools and local businesses, students improve their personal skills and develop their confidence.
- The behaviour of all groups of students is exemplary. Very high quality support and effective behaviour management systems ensure that students learn to manage their own behaviour.
- Students' attendance improves as they move through the school so that it is at an exceptionally high level.
- Teaching is outstanding. Well-planned lessons and rigorous checking of skills ensure that students of all abilities achieve exceptionally well.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed students' learning in 10 lessons, all jointly with the senior leaders. The inspectors also listened to some students reading symbols or words during their lessons.
- Inspectors visited the off-site sixth form provision and observed two lessons and spoke to students and staff.
- The inspectors had lunch with students and talked to some of them about their work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the outreach teacher, the family support worker and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range 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 12 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. The 51 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school caters for students who are supported by a statement of special educational needs for their severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- About a quarter of students also have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage.
- 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 sports funding.
- Additional catch-up funding is provided for all students in Year 7.
- The school provides outreach support to primary schools in Andover.
- The sixth form is based in a bungalow about a mile from the main site.
- The nearby Sparsholt College provides off-site training in vocational education for sixth form students for one day each week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase opportunities for children in the early years provision to make better use of the spacious outdoor area so that they are more active in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders, staff and the governors, has led to rapid and sustained improvement in the quality of teaching over the past three years. As a result, students now make excellent progress and their previous high quality behaviour and personal development have been maintained.
- Leaders are always evident around the school, from their morning greetings to waving students off at the end of the day. Staff are overwhelmingly supportive. They ensure that their students receive the best possible support, which helps students to develop the confidence to do their very best so that they achieve exceptionally well.
- Very effective support is provided by middle leaders, who ensure that subjects and topics fully meet students' abilities and interests. This ensures that students receive an excellent education and that they make outstanding progress in numeracy and literacy.
- Leaders set annual targets for all teachers linked closely to students' achievements. Increases in salary are based on whether teachers fully meet their targets.
- Students are very enthusiastic about the range of topics offered, which often include visits to places of interest or involvement in learning with students from other local schools. As a result, they work hard to succeed.
- Excellent strategies are in place to manage any challenging behaviour. As a result, students try hard to conform and almost all attend school regularly.
- The rich range of opportunities offered contributes extremely well to students' academic achievements, their physical skills and their personal development. For example, students took part in a recent production of *Macbeth* in the local theatre. Close links with schools in five other European countries, and a forthcoming visit to Spain by older students, support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Activities provided by the school regularly promote British values and help to prepare students for life in modern Britain. Examples of this include the annual St George's Day tea party which students provide for the elderly people of Andover. Also, the way in which students raise funds for charities such as Children in Need by making and selling cakes contributes to the wider community. Several undertake work experience in local shops. These opportunities help to promote empathy and improve students' attitudes and awareness of safety.
- Students' achievements are regularly checked by leaders to make sure that they all meet their expected targets. Extra support is provided where necessary so that all students now make at least the progress expected of them in English and mathematics. A high proportion exceed their expected progress.
- Leaders know that students' achievements are accurately measured because they check them against outcomes in other special schools and with the local authority. Monitoring of progress, attendance and behaviour for those who attend off-site provision is of a high quality.
- The local authority provides good light-touch support for the school because it knows that leadership and management are extremely strong.
- Older students benefit from high quality careers guidance to help them make choices about their futures. They undertake work experience in local businesses or in school. A few talked eagerly to inspectors about their work placements, showing pride in their successes.
- Leaders ensure equality of opportunity for all students at the school through the curriculum and regular assemblies. The school promotes tolerance and respect for other faiths and cultures. Clubs and activities are open to all. This ensures that there is no discrimination.
- The school's own data show that students achieve outstandingly well from their low starting points. Those eligible for the additional pupil premium funding achieve as well as other students because of extra support, technological aids and therapies provided by leaders.
- Parents who responded to Parent View are extremely pleased with the school and said that their children achieve very well.
- Very effective use of primary physical education and sport funding has enabled students to take part in activities with other local schools. This has resulted in more of them participating in sport. Funding to support students in Year 7 to catch up is used very well to provide additional resources and support so that their progress improves.
- The school's safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and are effective. Staff are very well trained in identifying students at risk of harm and systems to keep pupils safe are well followed. Risk

assessments are regularly used for all external visits.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is very effective. Members of the governing body have improved their skills since the previous inspection. They are very supportive of leaders. Governors have the skills required to support the school and hold it to account. Members are fully aware of the quality of teaching and take an active part in managing the performance of staff. They understand the procedures for setting targets for teachers and they regularly use these to reward the best teachers. They know how the school would tackle any underperformance. They know that students' achievement is excellent and that behaviour is exceptional. Governors know and understand the school's performance data and they regularly review it to check students' progress. Governors manage the school's finances well. They use additional funding very effectively to ensure that it improves the learning of those students for whom it was intended, enabling them to achieve as well as the other students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This has been maintained over the past three years.
- Excellent behaviour is evident as students come joyfully into school each day to be greeted by staff and hurry to class.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards other students and staff and to their tasks. This is because relationships are rich and the management of behaviour is rigorous. It is also due to the students wanting to please. They are all keen to gain a 'star of the week' award and try very hard to be the most successful in their class.
- School staff are confident that students' behaviour is outstanding. Parents agree.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted excellently through high quality support and well-planned assemblies. Students are polite, respectful and eager to please. They regularly support the efforts of their classmates.
- Students of all ages are very clear about the difference between right and wrong and enjoy the balanced approach to a broadly Christian religious education, which includes other world faiths. For example, they celebrate Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year with equal enthusiasm.
- Students have a strong sense of responsibility. For example, a recent initiative resulted in every student at the school raising enough money, through activities such as cake sales or making jam, to buy vaccine for 20 children around the world to prevent polio.
- Students' attendance has improved so that it is better than in other special schools and above that in mainstream secondary schools.
- The school prepares students exceptionally well for their futures through their improved achievements, excellent behaviour and their strong work ethic.
- Students in the sixth form behave exceptionally well in the bungalow and in their college courses. Children in the early years provision behave well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Policies and procedures are very effective.
- Older students told inspectors that they understand about the different forms of bullying. They said that any issues are quickly dealt with by staff or leaders. They all know who to go to and they know that any problems that they have will be sorted out.
- Students told inspectors that they understand about taking risks and are helped to deal with them. They know about e-safety by the time they reach Years 10 and 11. Students were proud of taking independent bus journeys to college, receiving rewards for their success.
- Sixth formers are safe in their accommodation at the bungalow and at college. They fully understand the importance of safe practices.
- Children in the early years provision are safe and secure.
- Risk assessments are a regular feature of school and community activities, ensuring that individual needs are very well catered for.
- The behaviour and safety of any students attending alternative provision are regularly checked and found to be outstanding.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Skilled teaching that meets students' individual needs very well ensures that students make outstanding progress during their time at the school. The headteacher's vision is that every student deserves the best possible education and feels valued. As a result, leaders provide high quality training for all staff and regular checks for teachers.
- Expectations are high for each and every student so that they are encouraged to do their very best. As a result, almost all students make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science, as well as in their personal development.
- Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, for example, made excellent progress as they focused on sensory activities to encourage looking and listening. They benefited from very well-planned tasks that were individual to each student.
- All students are carefully targeted to help them stay on task and achieve as well as possible. A group of students in Year 8 were highly challenged by questions which extended their knowledge of how to read recipes to make muffins. Very effective signing by the teacher, including the excellent use of symbols, enabled these students to follow the lesson and achieve extremely well.
- Excellent teaching of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that all students receive additional attention. This means that they understand what is expected of them and are able to succeed. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved, resulting in reading skills rising, particularly for the most able students.
- The assessment of students' learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science, is rigorous and regular. Marking for the most able students is helpful and enables them to improve their work. Assessment for less able students is usually verbal so that they too can understand what they need to do next to improve.
- Students with additional needs receive extra support from teaching assistants so that they achieve as well as other students. Resources are used extremely well and the very effective whole-school approach to the use of signs and symbols ensures that students understand their lessons and can respond to questions and make choices. A range of therapies supports the quality of provision extremely well.
- Behaviour is very well managed and lessons are calm and productive. Students regularly receive homework.
- The most able students work at a fast rate and are highly challenged by their tasks. This helps them to succeed on their accredited courses.
- Teaching in the early years provision is good. This is because of effective levels of support and individual tasks that enable children to make good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding because students are highly challenged by the work set.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students' attainment on entry to the school is very low, particularly in reading and writing, owing to their severe or profound learning difficulties.
- Evidence from observations of students in lessons, from students' books and from school data shows that over time almost all students achieve outstandingly well. This is because of the very high quality of support that students receive and also because tasks and activities are very well matched to their needs and abilities.
- The quality of students' learning across Key Stages 1 to 4 is excellent. High levels of challenge, as well as much individual attention, enable them to understand what is expected, settle and make the best possible progress. The very exciting curriculum on offer gains their interest and enthusiasm.
- Students talked to inspectors with enthusiasm about their recent production of *Macbeth*. They are very proud of their acting, where they share the stage with other local schools.
- Students who have left the school in the past two years have all acquired accreditation and found a college course or employment.
- Students in Year 11 successfully undertake accredited courses such as entry level courses in English and mathematics and ASDAN qualifications. Achievement is outstanding, despite published data not appearing to show this because students come from much lower starts than most other students nationally to catch up and acquire qualifications.
- The wide range of abilities at the school are very well met and, as a result, all groups of students,

including those who receive additional funding, those who have additional sensory or physical difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders and those from different ethnic backgrounds, achieve equally well.

- Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties or other additional special educational needs receive individual help and benefit from working individually with staff to improve their reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- The progress of disadvantaged students is at least similar to that of other students in the school and sometimes better than this. This is because of the additional support that is provided for these students and the extra resources, such as computer tablets, that are available to support their learning. The most able students achieve particularly well in mathematics, science and art as a result of the exceptional teaching in these areas.
- Students' sports skills are improving because the additional funding has enabled the school to engage in activities with other schools and also to increase the range of resources available.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in the early years provision enjoy school and make a good start to their education. They benefit from high quality support and good accommodation so that they achieve well in literacy and numeracy and in their personal development.
- The quality of education offered is good. It has depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning and provides a wide range of exciting activities that children enjoy.
- Teaching is good and adults provide activities that are set at the right level. For example, children were observed having their snack. They were really enjoying this activity, behaving well and taking turns. They were polite and helpful to each other, extending their language skills. Expectations of each child were high.
- Tasks are well planned, contributing to children's learning, including their emotional health, safety and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Partnerships with a range of therapists ensure that children's well-being and progress are at least good.
- There are times when the spacious and creative outdoor area is under-used by children. At these times children spend too long sitting and listening and do not have enough opportunities to explore, learn or play outside. As a result, they sometimes have too few opportunities to be active and improve their physical skills by regularly playing and learning outdoors.
- Children's skills are checked regularly to make sure that progress is good. There is clear evidence of children achieving their targets in the past year.
- Children learn simple phonics daily, ensuring that they are learning how to match letters and sounds through playing games. This is particularly evident for the most able children although all children are fully involved.
- Staff work very well with parents keeping them in touch with their children's progress through good quality home/school books.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies are fully in place, ensuring that children are safe and secure.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff who work in the early years provision have appropriate qualifications to support children. Checking of teaching and support is regular and ensures that there is continuous improvement. Leadership of the early years provision is good.
- Children behave well and most are beginning to interact with adults and other children.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Sixth form students achieve outstandingly and make better-than-expected progress in their accredited courses. Leaders have an accurate view of the sixth form. Provision for sixth formers is outstanding. Almost all students join from the main school, but a few others join from other local schools.
- Teaching is outstanding. It is highly appropriate to age and abilities. High quality support is provided for students' accreditation as well as for their personal development. Students have both academic and personal targets and they make excellent progress in both of these. They benefit from employability skills training and learn how to manage money and how to spend it wisely.
- There is a very strong link between students' needs and the courses that are provided. Their achievements are regularly tracked to ensure that they are on task.
- Staff know students well. Relationships are very positive. Students are confident that they can talk to any

staff member about their problems.

- The sixth form curriculum meets the needs and abilities of students very well. It fully ensures that students have excellent opportunities to learn about the wider world. They are taught to travel to college by themselves, catching buses and learning the skills that will serve them in the future. One group is currently planning with staff for a visit to a school in Spain later this year.
- Students' achievement in English and mathematics is outstanding because of the regular daily sessions. When they leave the school almost all students go on to full- or part-time college courses to work. A few already work part-time in local shops.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary and they say that they enjoy their sixth form experience.
- Students say they feel safe when they are at college, travelling around or on their work placements.
- Students have a very strong awareness of personal risk and e-safety. They discuss dangers with staff.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. Leaders have successfully developed the off-site bungalow to fully meet the needs and abilities of students. They have extended the range of accreditation so that students are extremely well prepared for their futures.

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	116609
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	449475

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoffrey Philpot
Headteacher	Sharon Salmon
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 March 2012
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