

Heathfield Special School

Oldbury Way, Fareham, PO14 3BN

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress of pupils requires improvement as not enough pupils make good progress, because pupils are not sufficiently purposefully engaged in lessons.
- In mathematics, some pupils' misconceptions are not always addressed. Pupils do not read often enough, restricting their progress.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Monitoring by senior leaders is not rigorous enough.
- The school's self-evaluation is too generous.
- Governors do not hold the school to account closely enough.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not plan well enough for play and outdoor learning activities, which often means that it is too unstructured and lacks a clear learning purpose.
- Expectations are too low, particularly for more able pupils. There is not a sharp enough focus on their academic progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The school works closely in partnership with parents and they hold the school in high regard.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.
- The early years provision is good and meets the needs of children well.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Most pupils enjoy school and many make good improvements in their behaviour.
- The pastoral team is very effective in providing and accessing additional support for pupils and parents.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in parts of 14 lessons, most of which were jointly observed with different members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, teaching staff, pupils and members of the governing body.
- The inspection team took account of 16 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the school's recent survey of parents' views.
- Responses from 32 staff to the Ofsted questionnaire were also taken into account.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's information on pupils' progress, its self-evaluation, development plans and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Emma Sanderson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Heathfield School caters for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders and complex learning needs. Nearly all pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic groups other than White British is below average, and the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported by additional funding known as the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after.
- Children attend the early years and Reception provision on a full-time basis.
- The school provides support to pupils and families through a pastoral team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring higher levels of positive engagement by pupils in lessons
 - improving the rigour of teachers' planning for play and outdoor learning, so there is a clear learning purpose to these activities
 - ensuring pupils' mistakes in mathematics are addressed appropriately.
- Improve pupils' progress by:
 - increasing the level of challenge for more able pupils
 - ensuring pupils read more often and widely.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - improving the rigour of monitoring of teaching and learning, to focus more sharply on the progress and learning of pupils
 - ensuring the school' self-evaluation more accurately reflects the status of the school
 - undertaking an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement at all levels, because they do not ensure teaching is good or that pupils make sufficiently good progress overall.
- The school's self-evaluation is too generous, providing an overly optimistic view of the strengths of the school. This has not helped governors or the local authority to challenge the school on its practice.
- Teaching is not led and managed effectively. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not perceptive enough in identifying where improvements need to be made. It has not addressed too much emphasis on unfocused play by pupils and poor levels of engagement in lessons by some pupils. Lesson observations do not focus enough on the progress that pupils make.
- Middle leadership requires improvement as leaders are developing their roles, with some middle leaders being relatively new to their role. They analyse assessment information to make improvements. However, inconsistencies in practice across the school exist. For example, the amount of time devoted to reading across the school varies considerably, or how teachers address mistakes in mathematics made by pupils.
- The arrangements for the checking of teachers' work have not led to improved teaching across the school. Teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. The link between the quality of teaching and salary progression is weak.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used to provide additional support and experiences for pupils, increasing their personal, social and academic development. These pupils achieve as well as other pupils across the school. Senior leaders are able to identify improvements for individual pupils as a result of this funding.
- Primary sport funding for physical education is used to increase the range and frequency of pupils' physical activities, including horse riding, competitive sports and kickboxing, to promote pupils' health and well-being.
- The school is a welcoming and supportive environment and has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity, which helps to prevent any form of discrimination. Strong and positive relationships between staff and pupils are evident and the majority of parents agree that their children's individual needs are well met. Pupils' behaviour has improved well over time.
- British values are actively promoted in line with the school's own values of tolerance, respect and behaviour. Pupils are exposed to the wider world, through visits and trips, contributing well to their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' communication, sensory awareness and social skills well, but the lack of rigorous planning leads to slower progress for some pupils.
- The local authority views the school as a good school and as a low priority for help and support. However, it acknowledges that the school now requires increased visits and advice to support its move to becoming good.
- The support provided to families through its pastoral team is excellent. This has contributed to strong links between home and school. Parents spoken to said how willing the school was to go the 'extra mile' in order to address pupils' individual needs.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Pupils are closely supervised in school. Staff and governors' safeguarding training is up to date, as is the training of senior designated lead staff for safeguarding. Concerns are passed on to the relevant agencies immediately.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The work of the governing body requires improvement. Governors do not hold the school to account closely enough. They have not looked at pupils' learning in enough detail and placed too much reliance on assessment information.
 - Governors make evaluations of the quality of teaching based on information provided by senior leaders, but the links between the quality of teaching and pay are not robust enough. They have tackled inadequate teaching where necessary.
 - Governors know how additional funding is spent, but are less clear about the impact of specific interventions and how successful or otherwise these are.
 - Governors carry out their statutory duties to safeguard pupils effectively. They undertake a wide range of training, are committed and are supportive of the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour around the school is largely good. Some pupils have challenging behaviour but they make good improvements over time.
- Pupils follow the rules within each class setting, which are applied consistently and understood by pupils.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and indicates their enjoyment of school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is encouraged well. Pupils develop good relationships with staff and each other. They learn how to co-operate well with each other by working in pairs or small groups.
- Pupils participate in the school council to make their views known. They make suggestions for improvement and reflect on what they like at school, and what developments they would like to see happen.
- Parents spoken to say how much their children's behaviour improves and how much they enjoy school.
- On occasions, when teaching does not engage pupils well enough, pupils' behaviour is adversely affected.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The vast majority of parents feel that their children are safe in school. Bullying is uncommon. Occasional incidents are dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils are greeted off transport in the morning and they are safely escorted into school.
- Thorough risk assessments are completed for off-site visits to ensure the safety of pupils during visits.
- The positive and supportive relationships evident across the school contribute very well to pupils feeling safe and confident.
- Safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and up-to-date to ensure pupils are protected and safe.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The previous inspection required the school to increase the amount of outstanding teaching. Inspection findings do not support the school's view that teaching is outstanding. There are inherent weaknesses in teaching across the school, apart from the early years.
- Generally, planning for outdoor learning activities lacks rigour leading to too much unfocused play. When this is the case, these activities do not challenge pupils enough academically.
- Some highly structured learning activities are mundane and repetitive. They concentrate for too long on consolidation of existing skills, such as the completion of undemanding jigsaws or worksheets.
- The teaching of mathematics requires improvement. Pupils' misconceptions are not always identified. For example, some pupils' work shows mistakes in addition and use of mathematical operations, which have not been picked up and addressed by teachers.
- There are a number of strengths to teaching. Therapists work closely with teaching staff to reduce pupils' barriers to learning. They provide good quality professional guidance and support, for example, in using sensory methods to help pupils to learn more effectively.
- In the best examples of outdoor learning, all pupils are purposefully engaged. There is a clear focus on learning. In one lesson, some pupils made tally charts by counting laps of a course they had completed using their scooters, while others learned which items floated or sank in water.
- The outdoor learning activities are imaginative and creative. They provide good levels of enjoyment for pupils and interactions between staff and pupils. For example, one pupil concentrated well to make circular patterns in chocolate mousse.
- Teachers know their pupils well and manage their behaviour effectively. They work closely with parents so that their children's behavioural or communication problems are improved. Parents feel that staff go beyond what is required to help pupils and their families.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Pupils' attainment levels are well below average on entry due to the nature of their learning difficulties. Although school information suggests pupils make outstanding progress, inspection evidence shows pupils' progress requires improvement.
- Outdoor learning opportunities encourage pupils' personal, social and communication skills well, but missed opportunities by staff and ineffective planning mean that academic skills are not progressed as rapidly as they should be.
- Some pupils do not engage enough in the activities and they are 'off task' for too long, limiting their rate of progress.
- Children in the early year's provision make good progress, because planning is clear and work is well matched to their abilities.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar rates of progress as other pupils. The school analyses assessment information and uses this to make improvements, such as the development of pupils' fine motor skills, drawing on expertise from occupational therapists and physiotherapists.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their personal, social and communication skills. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to cooperate with each other and develop their language and communication skills.
- Pupils learn to recognise letter sounds through forming letters in a variety of different mediums, such as sand or paint. Some more able pupils read with confidence and can extract key information from the passage they have read. However, pupils do not read widely or often enough on a systematic basis across the school, with classes devoting differing amounts of time to reading.
- Pupils enjoy practical opportunities to develop their mathematical skills and learn how to handle numbers and solve problems. On occasions, some pupils repeat work unnecessarily, restricting their progress.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children join the school with skills that are well below what is typical for their age. However, children are highly motivated and curious to learn. The environment provided for them feeds their enquiring minds well. They benefit from a wide range of stimulating and exciting sensory experiences. Children's behaviour and attitudes improve well as a result and their enjoyment of learning is clearly evident.
- Teaching is good because staff facilitate challenge through questioning and pose tasks to further develop children's skills well. Planning for free-flow play is clear and matched well to the individual needs of children. On entry to school, some children are reluctant to touch new and different sensory items such as noodles or dry-mix ingredients, but over time, through constant encouragement, they become more inquisitive learners and engage with new experiences more readily. Children develop their social and communication skills well in a range of different contexts.
- Children's progress is measured against their different starting points and judgements are externally checked to ensure accuracy. Children are well prepared for moving to Year 1.
- The early years provision is well led and managed. The progress of children is carefully tracked. Links with home are excellent and parents are fully informed about their children's achievement and progress.
- Children in the early years are cared for and kept safe well by the adults.

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	116607
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	448058

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Goble
Headteacher	Nicky Cunningham
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 June 2012
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