

# Brent Knoll School

Mayow Road, London, SE23 2XH

**Inspection dates** 08–09 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The experience and expertise of the headteacher has enabled him to build an effective team of senior staff. Together, they carefully check on all aspects of the school's work and have consistently improved the quality of teaching.
- Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. The quality of teaching has risen consistently since the previous inspection.
- Teachers know their pupils well. With a few exceptions, they provide the pupils with activities which challenge them to do their best and which are well suited to their abilities.
- The pupils achieve well throughout the school. A growing minority make rapid progress. Older pupils achieve success in GCSE and Entry Level Certificate qualifications.
- Children in the early years provision make outstanding progress because of excellent teaching.
- The subjects that the pupils study are well planned to interest them and to promote their progress. The pupils enjoy their learning.
- The pupils feel entirely safe and secure.
- The pupils' behaviour is outstanding. This is because adults manage their behaviour very effectively. Pupils understand and willingly follow the clear rules for their conduct. They are very positive about the school's emphasis on developing tolerance and respect.
- Their attendance is above average compared to similar schools.
- The governing body is well informed about the school's work. Governors rigorously monitor the extent of pupils' progress and the performance of adults. They provide significant challenge to and support for the school's leaders.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes, teachers do not plan activities in sufficient detail for all groups of pupils in order to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable.
- Not all adults consistently record the extent of pupils' progress in lessons.
- On occasions, teachers do not ensure that pupils take sufficient notice of written comments in their books about how to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not always fully understand how to make their work better.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 15 lessons, all of which were joint observations with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body. Telephone discussions were conducted with representatives of the local authority. Frequent informal discussions were held with pupils to establish their attitudes towards school and their enjoyment of their learning.
- Inspectors took into account the school’s surveys of parents’ opinions and the results of the online parents’ questionnaire, (Parent View) to which there were 10 responses. The 19 completed staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents, including the school’s review of its own performance and examples of forward planning. They analysed records of pupils’ progress and achievement in their academic and personal development as well as monitoring reports on the quality of teaching, the performance management of staff and curriculum documents. Inspectors also looked at attendance figures, and procedures to ensure the safeguarding of pupils.

## Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Humphreys

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with complex social, communication and interaction difficulties. The overwhelming majority of pupils on the school's roll have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders.
- All the pupils have statement of special educational needs.
- About a fifth of pupils are girls.
- The school is part of a co-operative trust, the Brent Knoll and Watergate Co-operative Trust. The trust was formed in 2012, incorporating the Brent Knoll School and Watergate School. The schools have separate governing bodies.
- There is an above average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds but a lower than average proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is above average. These pupils receive additional government funding (the pupil premium).
- A very small number of pupils are in full-time early years provision at the school.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school will move to new premises in September 2015.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - teachers' planning always focuses sufficiently on the learning needs of all groups of pupils
  - adults consistently record the extent of pupils' progress in lessons
  - all pupils fully understand how to make their work better.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- There has been effective leadership by the headteacher and his team of senior staff. Ably led by the headteacher, these leaders consistently communicate high expectations to both staff and pupils. Teachers and parents are enthusiastic about the school's work. One adult at the school commented, 'I enjoy coming to work every day'. The morale of the staff is high.
- The school's middle leaders who are in charge of subjects, and a small team of 'leading practitioners', work effectively in helping to raise the quality of teaching through regular checks on teachers' performance.
- School leaders systematically check the progress of each pupil. As a result, teachers quickly intervene to give appropriate extra support, should a pupil start to fall behind. Adults are committed to promoting the equal opportunities of each pupil, so that all do as well as possible. There is no discrimination. Pupils from minority ethnic groups as well as those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils.
- The early years provision is managed very well. The early years leader ensures that teaching is outstanding and as a result, the children make outstanding progress.
- The school makes good use of the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils to provide extra support for pupils in English and mathematics, individually or in small groups, as well as additional speech therapy and occupational therapy. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, equal to that of other pupils in the school. The school makes successful use of the Year 7 'Catch-up' funding to provide additional support in literacy.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, evaluate the school's work thoroughly and accurately. This has led to realistic and ambitious planning for further development. The school's leaders are well aware of occasional inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' planning and marking, and there are detailed plans to remedy these. Due to this rigorous self-evaluation and the determination of all staff, there is a good capacity to make further improvement. The local authority has no concerns about the school and maintains a 'light-touch' overview of its performance.
- Leaders rigorously monitor the performance of teachers. Teachers respond positively to the high expectations of their work and the challenging targets for improvement which are set. They value the opportunities for coaching (working with experienced teaching staff) and further training provided by senior and middle leaders. Teachers are fully aware that they are accountable for the quality of their teaching and the progress of their pupils and that pay awards are dependent on meeting their targets.
- The pupils enjoy school. They are interested in the subjects they study. Pupils in the primary department and those in Years 7 and 8 follow programmes closely linked to National Curriculum study. These subjects are carefully adapted to meet the pupils' learning needs.
- Pupils are taught the subjects through topics, such as 'Myself'. The pupils enjoy the topics which effectively promote their communication, literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers effectively build activities which practise and develop communication, whether through symbols or in spoken English, into every part of the pupils' learning. In almost every activity, the pupils have good opportunities to extend their skills in reading, writing and mathematics and this helps to ensure they make good progress in these subjects.
- Older pupils in Years 10 to 11 follow appropriate programmes which lead to success in GCSE and Entry Level Certificate qualifications. School staff give effective careers guidance and support to older pupils, which has resulted in a very high proportion going on to further education or training.
- All the pupils take part in extensive personal, social and health-related courses. These courses, along with the many opportunities for individual counselling, teach them effectively about how to avoid dangers and how to develop their relationships with others. The curriculum, together with excellent behaviour management, teaches the pupils very effectively how to control their own conduct and to have regard for others.
- The pupils gain a good understanding of British values. They learn about the diversity of cultures and traditions in their community and about the importance of laws and rules. Pupils learn effectively about prejudice and the need to challenge stereotypes. The pupils enjoy their learning about democracy and choice through enthusiastic participation in elections for the school council. The school ensures they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school makes effective use of the additional physical education and sports funding for primary-aged pupils. Sports coaches from a local professional football club work well, both with pupils and with staff. Leaders have used the funding to improve playground equipment and to enable staff to take part in further training in aspects of physical education and well-being. Records show that pupils have increased

their participation in and enjoyment of physical activity.

- The curriculum contributes effectively to the pupils' academic progress, their physical and emotional well-being and their behaviour. It makes a successful contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents report that they are pleased with the school's work. They are confident that their children are well looked after and are making good progress. One parent reported 'wonderful changes' in her son. A small proportion of parents were concerned about bullying but these concerns were not borne out by inspection evidence.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very secure. Procedures are well organised and scrutinised regularly by senior staff and a nominated governor.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body are well informed and have a good understanding of information about pupils' progress, how their achievement compares with that of pupils in similar schools, and the management of teachers' performance. They visit the school often and have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching. They are knowledgeable about how the school rewards good performance and tackles any underachievement. As a result, they contribute well to the school's development. They effectively oversee the salary arrangements for teaching.
  - Governors maintain close supervision of additional government funding and regularly check the impact on the pupils' progress and well-being. Governors strongly and effectively challenge the school's leaders. They ensure that all current statutory requirements, for instance about the safeguarding of pupils, are met.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are relaxed and happy and have excellent relations with the adults who look after them. They are always enthusiastic to take part in classroom activities. They have very positive attitudes to their learning and this has a significant impact on their good progress.
- The pupils behave very well around the school. They establish friendships with other pupils, play co-operatively at breaks and lunchtimes and behave sensibly and quietly in the dining room. The school is characterised by an ethos of tolerance and respect for others. It is a harmonious place of learning.
- The pupils' behaviour is managed exceptionally well. Staff are well trained in communicating effectively with pupils, and this helps to alleviate stress and frustration in pupils. Staff are also well trained in ways of keeping pupils calm. There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff and this helps to maintain a positive and purposeful atmosphere. Over time, pupils gain a good understanding of how to regulate their own behaviour, how to respond appropriately to other pupils, and to appreciate the effects that their behaviour has on others.
- The school monitors the pupils' behaviour effectively. Detailed records are kept of any incidents to allow staff to plan even more effectively for the well-being of each pupil. Records show that incidents have decreased significantly and there is a little use of exclusions.
- Parents and staff have confidence in the school's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour.
- The pupils' attendance is above average compared to similar schools. The staff make determined efforts to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. The home support officer visits and supports families effectively.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are robust and very well organised. All staff are very effectively trained in the school's policies. Governors and senior staff regularly monitor the effectiveness of the school's procedures.
- The pupils are very well supervised. The pupils report that bullying hardly ever happens. The school maintains detailed records which show that the extent of bullying is minimal and that members of staff act quickly in the event of any bullying incident. Adults work effectively with victim and perpetrator to show them why actions were unacceptable and how to restore friendships. Pupils know how to combat bullying in any form, including through the internet and by social media. For instance, pupils willingly hand in their phones every morning.
- The pupils take part regularly in trips out of school. This teaches them how to keep safe in unfamiliar situations, for example how to respond when dealing with strangers and how to cross the road safely.

Older pupils learn how to travel independently.

- Adults consistently teach pupils to be respectful to others. Pupils are made very aware of inappropriate language which may be derogatory to others. Adults ensure that the pupils understand how their words can affect others.
- Parents are satisfied that their children are safe and well looked after at school.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- There have been consistent improvements in the quality of teaching as a result of regular checks by senior and middle leaders. These checks are accompanied by further coaching and training, where appropriate. As a result, teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. This ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well over time.
- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' achievement. Activities build successfully on what the pupils already know and understand and are typically well planned to ensure the pupils make progress in small and achievable steps. Staff sometimes stretch the most-able pupils so that they achieve more highly. Some practice is, however, inconsistent. On occasions, however, teachers do not plan in sufficient detail to meet the needs of all pupils and to ensure good progress by all groups. This can slow down learning.
- The teaching of communication skills is a strength. Adults are well trained in the use of signs and symbols. They use carefully structured speech to ensure that pupils understand and they quickly and effectively adapt their questions and explanations to reshape learning, if necessary. This ensures that the pupils understand what they have to do and that they are confident in the support they are given by adults.
- There is good teaching of English. Younger pupils make good progress in learning the shapes and sounds of letters and words. Over time, pupils often make rapid progress in reading because of successful teaching. Teachers ensure that the pupils have good opportunities to read and write in every lesson. As a result, the pupils practise and extend their skills in a variety of contexts, and this supports their good progress.
- Mathematics is taught effectively and pupils make good progress throughout the school. In the different subjects, pupils practise their numeracy skills through counting, describing and creating different shapes and through working with adults to complete tasks. In a mathematics lesson in Year 8, for instance, pupils made rapid progress as they worked individually with adults to solve problems using counters, blocks and a dice. This very effectively encouraged the development of their mathematical and their communication skills.
- Teachers manage their classrooms well. Assistants are well briefed on the abilities of the pupils and give each pupil very effective individual tuition. They generally check their pupils' progress throughout each lesson. Many adults carefully record the progress which pupils make in each lesson, but this is not yet completely consistent throughout the school. This can result in pupils not always fully understanding what they have been taught.
- In most cases, teachers mark the pupils' work thoroughly, and almost always write in pupils' books comments about how they could improve their work. This is effective in accelerating the pupils' progress. On occasions, however, teachers do not check that pupils have understood and acted on the advice given. This can result in pupils making the same mistake again and does not help them to improve their work.

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Pupils enter the school with attainment which is typically much lower than average, because of their difficulties in communication. Their attainment remains generally lower than average throughout the school. Despite this, the pupils make good progress over time, and a rising proportion of pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- The pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because of the good teaching in communication, literacy and numeracy. Pupils' good progress in reading and writing enables them to make more rapid progress in the other subjects they study. The school's detailed tracking of pupils' progress shows that they make slightly quicker progress in mathematics than in reading and writing. The school is aware of this and there are detailed plans to redress the balance.
- The pupils' good progress throughout the school is shown in their success in GCSE and Entry Level Certificate qualifications in Year 11. There is no early entry for these examinations. Almost every pupil gains at least one qualification, whether in GCSE subjects including English and mathematics, or in a range of Entry Level Certificate examinations.
- On occasions, the most-able pupils achieve very well and attain A\* grades in GCSE examinations. The

most able are quickly identified through the school's effective assessment of pupils' performance. They are 'stretched' by the high expectations of their teachers.

- In recent years, almost every pupil has gone into further education courses, or into employment training, as a result of their good progress in school. The pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils. There are no significant gaps in their learning and they make progress at comparable rates to others because of the school's well-organised support and the extra resources provided to meet their needs. Their attainment is broadly similar to that of other pupils.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, those who speak English as an additional language and those with additional learning needs make equally good progress as a result of good teaching and well-structured extra support for individual pupils.

### **The early years provision**

**is outstanding**

- The very small number of children in the early years provision make outstanding progress in their communication skills and in their personal development. They enter the school with knowledge and skills which are significantly below those that are typical for their age, but achieve exceptionally well in learning to communicate and in their early literacy and numeracy skills.
- The children have a rich and stimulating environment. There are excellent resources to support their learning. Both the classroom and the outside facilities are very well organised to motivate, excite and encourage the children to explore and learn very well.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers prepare carefully structured activities for each child and adults support their learning very well by working closely with individual children. Adults are skilled in using signs and symbols to ensure the children understand how and what they are to learn. They develop the children's emerging language skills very effectively. There are high expectations of each child's achievement.
- Adults maintain detailed records of each child's progress in every lesson. As a result, they are able to match activities precisely to the children's ability and stage of learning. This helps to ensure their rapid progress, and excellent achievement.
- The children are highly motivated and keen to join in activities. They listen intently to carefully structured speech by adults and display intense interest in and concentration on their tasks. They particularly enjoy talking to the 'Bossy Lion' who asks them questions and gives them simple commands. This enhances their enjoyment of learning.
- The children behave very well. They quickly learn how to sit and listen to adults. They are positive towards others and learn to control their own behaviour well. They are kept very safe and secure. Adults take great care to ensure the well-being of the children.
- Parents are very satisfied with the quality of care provided by the school and with the progress their children make. There are excellent systems for communication with parents who are kept fully informed about their child's achievements and behaviour.
- The leadership of the early years provision is outstanding. The leader consistently sets high expectations for the quality of teaching and of care for children. Adults are very well trained in providing for the learning and the personal needs of the children and share the leader's enthusiasm to improve the children's achievement.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100760
<b>Local authority</b>	Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	447897

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	143
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Liz Bailey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Sharpe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 86991047
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