

# Pield Heath House RC School

Pield Heath Road, Uxbridge UB8 3NW

## Inspection dates

14–15 November 2018

| Overall effectiveness                        | Requires improvement |
|--|----------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Good                 |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Requires improvement |
| 16 to 19 study programmes                    | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Outstanding          |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils who attend the school have increasingly complex needs. This, together with a high turnover of staff who lack expertise to meet pupils' needs, has resulted in a decline in the school's overall effectiveness.
- A new assessment system for pupils with complex needs has yet to be rolled out across the school. This prevents leaders from assessing the school's effectiveness accurately.
- Senior leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the school's performance.
- Assessments are not used well enough to ensure that activities are pitched at the right level of challenge in lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable. This is particularly so in English and mathematics. Pupils do not make the progress they are capable of across all key stages.
- There are insufficient resources in mathematics to support the learning of pupils, especially those with complex learning difficulties. Activities are not suitably broken down into small steps to secure good progress.
- Teaching in the sixth form does not secure strong outcomes in English and mathematics.
- There are inconsistencies in the use of the school's agreed communication strategies and the effectiveness of adult support.
- Middle leaders, both pastoral and educational, have a limited impact on securing improvements for their areas of responsibility.
- Subject leaders do not have the expertise or experience to be held fully to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. The lack of a middle leader for mathematics is a further weakness.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in their communication, social and independent skills.
- Pupils' and students' behaviour is managed effectively. The school is a calm and safe place for pupils to learn and thrive. Staff are vigilant in protecting pupils. Pupils are kept safe and secure.
- Senior leaders are well focused on improving the quality of teaching. They provide teachers with quality support and training, particularly those new to the school.
- Senior leaders know what the school's priorities are and have started to implement the right improvement strategies.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in English and mathematics, to enable both pupils and students in all key stages to make consistently strong progress by ensuring that:
  - teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils and students can achieve in English and mathematics, including access to courses for most-able students which lead to vocational qualifications
  - teachers use assessments more effectively so that work is better matched to pupils' needs and abilities
  - teachers provide pupils with practical activities and visual prompts to support their learning
  - staff receive high-quality training and support to help them use the school's agreed communication strategies confidently, accurately and consistently
  - support staff consistently guide pupils' learning and behaviour effectively.
- Strengthen leadership capacity by:
  - developing the skills, knowledge and roles of middle leaders to enable them to have a greater impact on school improvement, and holding leaders fully to account for their work, including the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make
  - securing a middle leader for mathematics
  - urgently implementing the new assessment and tracking system to enable leaders to evaluate the school's effectiveness precisely
  - securing an external view of the school's strengths and weaknesses to validate new assessments, to confirm leaders' evaluations and to use this information to inform governors so that they are better able to challenge leaders at all levels.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Senior leaders are well focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Leaders are effective role models for other leaders and staff. They provide guidance and training, including mentoring for those teachers who are either new to the school and/or need further support. New teachers have made a positive start to their teaching career. Nonetheless, there remains a small minority of staff who do not respond well enough to the incisive feedback that senior leaders provide them with to improve their practice. This is a key reason why the profile of teaching requires improvement and why this prevents pupils from making sustained and strong progress.
- Senior leaders have put in place a new approach to check the progress of pupils, including those pupils with complex needs in key stage 3. However, because this is not routinely implemented across the school, leaders are not able to judge precisely the quality of teaching and the impact that this has on pupils' progress.
- Both subject and pastoral middle leaders do not analyse key information to identify what is working well and what needs further attention. This includes information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Subject leaders, most of whom are new to their role, lack the necessary skills and experience to secure improvements in the quality of teaching in order to improve pupils' progress in all subjects. This is particularly so in English and mathematics.
- Senior leaders recognise much of this and have implemented a mentoring programme for middle subject leaders. This is yet to have a sustained impact. Furthermore, there is no middle leader responsible for mathematics. As a result, progress in mathematics is weaker than in other subjects.
- There is a structured curriculum in place for key stage 2 to key stage 4 pupils. Skills, knowledge and understanding are promoted through a topic-based approach. Subjects taught, and the accreditation routes followed, are appropriate for the needs and abilities of pupils. However, although students gain functional skills qualifications that develop a variety of life skills, some courses are not rolled out quickly enough to enable the most able students to gain vocational qualifications. There is a wide range of enrichment activities which support pupils' and students' learning. The excellent facilities in the Victor Braun centre benefit the learning of both sixth-form students and younger pupils.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have a clear vision for the school. They are totally committed to equality of opportunity for all. The school is highly inclusive.
- Senior leaders make sure that pupils make good progress in their personal development. A multi-disciplinary team contributes to target setting and reviews of these targets. Pupils have individualised support plans to boost their confidence, self-esteem and independence.
- Senior leaders are beginning to have an effective influence across the school. They know exactly what the school's priorities are, and new strategies are being implemented to secure improvements. There are weekly pupils' progress checks to make sure that pupils reach their targets. Support programmes are put in place if

required. As a result, current pupils are beginning to make better progress.

- Senior leaders encourage team work and help staff manage their workload more efficiently. This includes collaborative planning, and the use of electronic systems to collate key information such as recording behavioural incidents. The staff survey confirmed that while a small minority of staff do not feel suitably supported, most appreciate the help and guidance that they receive from senior leaders.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values are promoted strongly through the personal, social, health and economic curriculum and additional activities. Pupils undertake a wide variety of fundraising activities, including sponsored walks for local and international causes. The school's strong ethos of dignity, peace and tolerance enables pupils and students to develop a sense of respect, kindness and understanding of differences, including different faiths.
- The school receives some additional funding, including the pupil premium funding. Leaders, including governors, allocate all funding wisely in this school. Members of staff received training to implement a new behaviour management programme. The sports funding is used well. Pupils' physical mobility and team-building skills are fostered through outdoor activities, including sailing. Senior leaders are very successful in securing additional funding, which has been used to purchase polytunnels to enable pupils and students to develop horticultural skills, for example.
- Senior leaders have a strong partnership with parents and carers. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and well-being. The parents' forum and workshops provide much appreciated advice for parents. They are supported to promote their children's language and communication skills, as well being supported on how to manage their children's behaviour effectively. Parents are confident that the school keeps their children safe and are content with the curriculum activities.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governors are a dedicated team. They visit the school regularly and receive a wealth of information from senior leaders. Governors know that leaders ensure good-quality care for pupils' welfare and safety. They understand the challenges that the school faces in relation to the changing intake or to pupils who have increasing, complex needs. Governors know what the school's priorities are.
- Governors provide much needed support for the recruitment of new staff. They make sure that all the statutory requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding.
- However, governors are too reliant on the information that senior leaders provide them with. Despite having the ability to challenge leaders, they are not able to do so well enough in order to question leaders about the impact of their work effectively. Governors also have an over-inflated view of the school's performance.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead makes sure that all staff are up to date and trained in line with the latest statutory safeguarding requirements. The school's safeguarding culture ensures that safeguarding pupils is a key priority, and that it is everyone's responsibility.
- The six designated deputy safeguarding leads meet when necessary to make sure that all concerns raised are discussed and followed up with the appropriate agencies.
- The designated safeguarding lead and deputies review all safeguarding procedures and make changes to improve systems and processes. Case files are comprehensive and contain all the relevant information.
- Relevant safeguarding checks are made on new staff, including volunteers.
- The designated safeguarding lead works well with external agencies to secure safeguarding for vulnerable pupils.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because teachers do not routinely make effective use of assessments to provide work which builds systematically on what pupils already know and can do. Activities are often pitched at levels which pupils either find too hard or too easy. This is particularly so in mathematics.
- As a result, pupils make some progress in reading, writing, mathematics and in other subjects across the curriculum from their starting points. They do not make the good progress of which they are capable.
- Older pupils with complex needs have a designated place called the 'hub', which caters for those pupils who need small learning areas with intensive adult support. However, younger pupils who have complex needs often struggle to understand key ideas. This is because learning is not broken down into smaller and sequential steps.
- Adults use a range of communication methods, including signs and symbols to support verbal communication. Pupils understand what they are learning and know how well they are achieving. As a result, pupils make much stronger progress in their communication and independence skills. However, too many symbols which are not meaningful for pupils are evident in some learning areas.
- The effectiveness of adult support is variable. For example, some teaching assistants use incorrect cues, which leads to misconceptions in pupils' learning.
- In some teaching, there is a lack of concrete and practical resources, which prevents pupils from understanding and practising key skills in greater depth. This is especially so in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress over time when activities capture their attention and are practical. In science, younger pupils explore and investigate the property of liquids. Pupils develop effective enquiry skills, such as predicting and evaluating their experiments. Pupils' different abilities and needs are well planned for. The most able

are challenged in their thinking and record the results of their own experiments independently. Those who find learning difficult are guided well in their learning by support staff.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a multi-disciplinary approach in promoting pupils' welfare and personal development. Education and welfare staff, as well as therapists, all work together to secure effective provision for each pupil and student.
- Staff form strong relationships with pupils. They have a 'can do' attitude. This motivates pupils to concentrate, to persevere and to achieve well in their personal development. Usually, pupils are calm and content learners, who are constantly encouraged to engage in their work.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe at the appropriate level. They know that adults will keep them safe. However, older pupils' understanding of how to stay safe online is the weaker element.
- Pupils have an awareness of different forms of bullying but say there are very few incidents. This is confirmed by the school's records.
- Leaders keep very comprehensive records and plans to support the health and dietary needs of all pupils. All pupils have a health record and plan which includes contact details of health professionals. Residential pupils have a care plan detailing any health issues. Leaders meticulously record all relevant details, including the logging of medication. This reflects sound practice to support pupils' health and safety.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are usually polite and cooperative. Pupils enjoy socialising with each other, and with staff and visitors.
- Individual behaviour support records are developed for each pupil and student. These are based on information in pupils' education, health and care plans, as well as information from previous schools. Identified triggers and types of behaviour are recorded and analysed in order to minimise any potential further displays of difficult behaviours.
- The relatively new method of managing pupils' behaviour encourages those pupils who are able to try to develop self-control to do so through adult guidance and encouragement.
- Those staff who implement this strategy effectively offer positive reinforcement and praise for pupils for their efforts and achievements. This reduces negative behaviours and increases appropriate behaviours. As a result, no pupils have been physically restrained for the last 18 months. Most staff are skilled in pre-empting and diffusing

those pupils who find situations too stressful. They skilfully distract pupils and refocus their attention.

- However, there are some inconsistencies in how a small minority of staff implement the agreed whole-school policy and procedures.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. The school has a clear and effective system to follow up any absences and eliminate persistent absences.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Requires improvement**

- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and have an education, health and care plan to meet their individual needs. From very low starting points, pupils do not consistently make the progress they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics across all key stages.
- An evaluation of pupils' workbooks and individual case studies confirms that there are no discernible differences in the progress that different groups make or between key stages. All groups of pupils make some progress in reading, writing and mathematics irrespective of their SEND needs. Disadvantaged pupils, non-disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils all make similar progress.
- Pupils enjoy handling books. However, strategies to promote reading skills are new and have yet to secure sustained improvements in this subject. Leaders know that they need to provide more appropriate reading resources and to secure a wider range of texts that are well suited to the abilities and interests of pupils.
- Key stage 4 pupils experience the world of work, initially in school, and, when socially able, within the local community. Pupils are supported to make the right choices about the most relevant subjects to study because senior leaders provide effective and impartial careers advice.
- The school's progress information demonstrates that pupils make stronger progress in other subjects, including art, science, physical education and design and technology.
- Pupils make considerably better progress in their communication, social and independence skills. This is particularly so for older pupils and students in key stages 4 and 5.
- Senior leaders know how important it is to promote pupils' life skills. Older pupils live fulfilling and independent lives if possible. The school is successful in securing pupils' confidence and positive self-worth. As a result, most Year 11 pupils move to the school's sixth-form provision. The most able go on to further education placements and, following three years, young adults go on to college places, employment or training.
- Leaders check on the progress of pupils who attend alternative provision. These pupils make similar progress to those pupils who attend the school.

### **16 to 19 study programmes**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because students do not make the progress of which they are capable in English and

mathematics. Similar weakness exists in this provision as in other key stages. Students' starting points are not taken into consideration to inform teaching activities well enough in order to secure good progress.

- Leadership is shared between senior leaders. They ensure that the 16 to 19 study programmes take into consideration students' needs. On-site vocational lessons and courses, with subject specialists, allow students to learn new and technical skills in a familiar environment, with staff who understand their complex needs. However, the most able students are not always on courses which lead to appropriate vocational qualifications.
- Positive relationships exist between staff and students. Students are keen to participate and, when not engaged, are supported by adults to re-engage in their learning. However, the effectiveness of support staff is variable. Occasionally, adults do not take an active role in behaviour management in order to guide students back on track.
- Students experience meaningful on-site work-related activities which lead to qualifications, including working at on-site café, where learners use professional coffee equipment, make cakes and handle money.
- Teachers offer students a range of tasks that are meaningful and enjoyable. For example, in construction lessons, students make wooden boxes using a range of tools and safety equipment. Different modules enable staff to teach subject-specific and employability skills at the same time. This makes the activities relevant to the ability of each learner. There are well-resourced learning areas, including a kitchen, IT suite, hairdressing, woodwork shop, a poly-tunnel and studio for performing arts.
- The strong focus on developing independent, social and communication skills continues in this key stage. As a result, pupils make strong progress in this area. Students are supported to increase their independence and experience in new and unfamiliar settings with support. Teachers use a range of communication tools to help learners follow instructions and to encourage independence. Speech and language therapists provide quality interventions and are good role models for staff.
- Students feel safe. The school enables them to learn how to keep themselves. They understand what potential risks there are both online in their community. If students have any concerns or worries, they know that they can confide in an adult who will listen to them and sort out their difficulties.
- Employability and life skills are woven into the curriculum. Most students access part-time learning experiences, including work placements at external colleges. The school provides independent careers guidance, which enables all students to move on to further education colleges or supported learning living placements.
- Students have a half-term period at the start of key stage 5 when they have 'taster' sessions in all options. This allows the students and their families to make informed decisions about their future pathway.



## School details

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Unique reference number | 102464     |
| Local authority         | Hillingdon |
| Inspection number       | 10052833   |

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

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Type of school  | Special  |
| School category                                       | Non-maintained special   |
| Age range of pupils                                   | 7 to 19  |
| Gender of pupils                                      | Mixed  |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes         | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll                   | 94   |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 28   |
| Appropriate authority                                 | The governing body   |
| Chair   | Marius Sykes   |
| Executive Principal                                   | Sister Julie Rose  |
| Telephone number                                      | 01895 258 507  |
| Website   | <a href="http://www.pieldheathschool.org.uk">www.pieldheathschool.org.uk</a>     |
| Email address   | <a href="mailto:admin@pieldheathschool.org.uk">admin@pieldheathschool.org.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection                           | 26–27 February 2014  |

## Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with complex learning needs, moderate learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties. There are an increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and associated speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The school is divided into two separate sections: the main school for 7- to 16-year-old pupils and The Victor Braun Centre for sixth-form students.
- Pupils attend on a daily or weekly residential basis. The school also offers a respite service, in conjunction with social services, to enable pupils to access 24-hour

education and to help them improve their social, independence and life skills.

- There are more boys than girls on roll in the school. Pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- One out of three pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is well above the national average.
- The school does not receive any literacy and numeracy catch-up funding for Year 7 pupils.
- Pupils are from Hillingdon and from 14 other different local authorities.
- Small groups or a small group of sixth-form students are accompanied by school staff for one day every week at Langley and Uxbridge colleges. Other students are accompanied by a member of the school staff to a motor vehicles course (GEARZ) provided by Hillingdon Youth Service on one day per week.
- The executive principal has overall responsibility for both education and boarding, as well as oversight of one other school.
- The school is registered with the Department for Education under the Trusteeship of The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in most classes. Almost all observations were conducted jointly with leaders. The quality of pupils' work was also reviewed.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and governors, including the chair. Inspectors took account of the 34 responses from staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors talked with a group of pupils to listen to their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's improvement plan and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour were also considered.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Telephone conversations took place with a small number of parents.

## Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Tempany

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gaynor Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector

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