

# Inspection of a good school: Watling View School

Watling View, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 2NU

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Inspection dates:

10–11 March 2020

## Outcome

Watling View School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being at school. They are happy and well cared for. All pupils have a range of complex learning and/or medical needs. Pupils develop their learning, communication and social skills well.

Pupils' individual needs are well met. Parents agree that this is the case. As one parent stated: 'Watling View is a fantastic school with a dedicated team of great teachers. There is always a positive attitude around the school and it is like one big family unit.'

There are no signs of bullying in the school. Pupils behave well. Despite their complex communication needs, pupils begin to recognise when they are feeling unsettled or upset. When this happens, pupils are supported by staff. They help pupils find other ways to communicate when they need extra help.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities. They take part in community projects which help them build their confidence. Pupils work hard and want to meet the high aspirations that staff have for them. These are clearly identified on each 'child on a page' summary. Pupils become confident young adults ready to go onto the next stage of their life when they leave Watling View School.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children in early years settle well and enjoy school. Children successfully develop early speaking, listening and communication skills. They learn how to work with others. They are taught different methods of communication, such as using signs, symbols, pictures and speech. Communication skills continue to be an emphasis throughout the school and across all areas of the curriculum.

Throughout the school there is an emphasis on pupils working towards leading full and independent lives. The curriculum is planned so that pupils work on individual programmes. This includes pupils learning important basic skills and being able to manage

their behaviour in social situations. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to move around the school as independently as they can.

Reading is developed well using objects, symbols, pictures, letters and sounds. Adults encourage pupils to develop their communication skills in everyday situations. For example, pupils learn to read and use instructions in cookery. Some pupils can read words, sentences and basic stories. Leaders provide some opportunities to promote a love of reading by taking part in 'book weeks' and providing fun reading activities to share. Leaders are still working on how to provide more opportunities to reading in all lessons for some pupils.

The curriculum includes a range of visits, such as attending and running a local café and a stall at a local market. This enables pupils to be part of the local community and develop practical organisational skills, such as using number and money in a real-life situation. Pupils are also encouraged to take part in drama, including through a recent project with a Shakespeare theatre company. These opportunities help to develop pupils' confidence.

Students carry out curriculum work in the final three years, which prepares them for leaving school and moving onto the next stage of their education. This includes learning to behave well, communicate with others and use polite and responsible behaviours in public. Pupils' work is recognised through the range of external certificates pupils receive. Transition into local college provision is positive and successful. The school prepares students well and ensures the colleges are aware of the individual needs of each student.

Leaders work hard to ensure the needs of each pupil are successfully met. Staff understand the need to engage in the new curriculum and planning developments. This work is relatively new and being evaluated and reviewed.

Governors are clear about the priorities for the school and supportive of the changes needed to further develop provision. They provide a balanced level of both challenge and support to leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping children safe is given a high priority throughout the school. All staff are trained and know how to keep children safe. Governors keep a regular check that all procedures are carried out effectively, including the recruitment of new staff. Senior leaders have also created a small team of dedicated additional staff who work hard to provide extra support for pupils and their families who require it. If pupils require additional protection, the school are very clear in their follow up and gain the right help for them.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils who can read letters, sounds, words and sentences are not challenged as well as they could be. Leaders need to make sure that pupils have more opportunities to use their reading skills in all lessons.
- Movement through areas of the school via internal classroom doors is sometimes restricted and prevents chances for pupils to develop their independence. Leaders need to ensure teachers consider how to promote and include opportunities for pupils to develop greater independence.

## Background

When we have judged a special school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Watling View School to be good on 21–22 June 2016.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117683
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121481
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school
<b>School category</b>	Maintained special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	90
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	15
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Chloe Priest-Griffiths
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Scott
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.watlingview.herts.sch.uk/">www.watlingview.herts.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21–22 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Watling View School is a special school that caters for pupils from the age of two to 19 years.
- The school provides for pupils who have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. All the pupils have education, health and care plans.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in headteacher and senior leadership team.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. We also met with a range of teachers, support staff and newly qualified teachers.

- We carried out deep dives in reading/communication, mathematics and personal, social and health education. We discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupil work and spoke to teachers from the lessons. We were accompanied by senior leaders when visiting lessons and when looking at pupils' work and behaviour in lessons.
- Safeguarding processes were scrutinised. We met with the designated safeguarding leader and the family liaison officer. We reviewed processes and procedures relating to safeguarding. We looked at individual support gained for families from other services and how the school was influential in helping facilitate this. We also observed break and lunchtimes and spoke to a variety of staff at these times.
- We met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. We also read reports and spoke by telephone with the local authority improvement partner for the school.
- We looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation of current performance and plans for development; minutes of governing body meetings; information relating to safeguarding; information on curriculum plans; pupil profiles and information on 'child on a page'; information on different access to additional support and therapies provided at the school and information on the school's website.
- We took account of the 23 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the six free-text responses. We also looked at the 48 staff responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Jackie Mullan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Bailey

Ofsted Inspector

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