

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Marjorie McClure School

110 Slades Drive, Chislehurst BR7 6FG

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 June 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy here. They arrive with smiles, ready to learn. Staff take time to understand pupils' complex learning and communication needs. They use this knowledge effectively to build strong relationships with pupils. Consequently, pupils feel safe and well supported.

The school has just moved to a brand new, state-of-the-art building. Pupils are already benefiting from having access to extensive new facilities. These include a specialist pool, where pupils have access to underwater vibration therapy, outdoor storytelling areas, and a fully immersive video room. In time, the curriculum will develop to make the most of these exciting new facilities.

The excellent enrichment programme provides all pupils with opportunities to participate in activities they would otherwise not experience. This helps to build pupils' confidence and resilience.

Parent satisfaction with the school is mixed. Parents and carers appreciate the practical approach to learning and were typically pleased with the school and its leadership. Some parents told inspectors that 'leaders are a massive help', and that they 'would not send their child to another school'. Others are disappointed. They do not feel that the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are being met.

Behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens, and they are confident that staff will help them if they need it.

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

Recently, the cohort of pupils attending the school has changed. Now, many more pupils come to the school due to profound learning, communication, and medical issues. In response, leaders have redesigned the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with very complex needs. The resulting curriculum ensures that pupils' learning builds in a logical way in most subjects. For instance, in English, the curriculum sets out the essential knowledge pupils need to learn and the order in which it should be taught. However, this is not yet consistently implemented. Senior leaders know this, and plans are well underway to make sure that pupils have the best opportunities to learn.

Leaders rightly prioritise the development of pupils' communication skills. This is a strength of the school. Highly effective partnership work with the speech and language therapist has helped staff to confidently use a range of communication support strategies, including signing. Consequently, pupils develop their communication skills exceptionally well. This also helps pupils to manage their behaviour. Learning is not disrupted due to poor behaviour.

Pupils are read to regularly by staff. They make stories accessible through talk or sensory experiences. Pupils who are able to learn phonics are provided with structured activities to help them recognise letter sounds and to build simple words.

Staff gain a clear picture of pupils' strengths and areas for development through frequent checks, including checks of pupils' physical development. Well-trained staff work closely with therapists, external specialists and other agencies. Support for pupils tightly matches that set out in their education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Staff provide pupils with a comprehensive and very well-considered range of enrichment activities. These include visits to the local farm, The Cutty Sark, and to a flat, where they stay overnight to practise independent living skills. These enrichment activities help pupils to transfer their skills into the community and to grow in confidence. Leaders' ambition for pupils is exemplified in the school's work with The Global Disability Innovation Hub to design a wheelchair driving programme that will be rolled out to other schools.

The curriculum in the sixth form has a strong focus on preparation for adult life and community-based learning. Leaders have implemented a well-planned and well-delivered careers programme, which ensures that pupils are informed about their options. Pupils have opportunities to study a wide range of vocational qualifications.

Governors know the school well and have a clear vision for its future. They have a wide range of skills and are very aware of their own roles and responsibilities. They carry them out with diligence. As a result, leaders and staff are challenged and supported well to fulfil the school's vision.

Generally, teachers say the workload is high, but this is because they want the best for their pupils. Most staff feel well supported by leaders.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff vetting and checking systems are completed thoroughly. Staff training is comprehensive and responds well to local risks and the needs of individual pupils.

Leaders have close links with a wide range of agencies. They get professional help for pupils and their families who may be at risk and who need help to support their welfare.

Pupils are clear about who to speak to should they be worried about anything.

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

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

- Occasionally, the curriculum does not contain enough information about the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn. This slows pupils' achievement in these areas of learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum clearly identifies the small building blocks of knowledge that pupils will acquire and the order they should learn them in as they progress through the school.
- The new build and changes to the school team have required the attention of leaders and have led to some parents and staff questioning the school's focus. Leaders and governors should ensure that they engage positively with parents and staff, gathering their views and opinions. Leaders should take these views into account as they continue this new phase of the school's journey.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in July 2014.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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>	101697
<b>Local authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268904
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 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>	112
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Andrew Stammers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Cottage
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.marjoriemcclure.org.uk">www.marjoriemcclure.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school exclusively caters for children with SEND, all of whom have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders.

- Inspectors held discussions with teachers, teaching assistants, parents and governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, communication, and personal development. For each of these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with members of staff, both individually and in groups, and spoke to pupils at various points during the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

### **Inspection team**

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

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