

Southall School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123631
Local Authority	Telford And Wrekin
Inspection number	342180
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Janet Thompson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Harris
Headteacher	Belinda Logan
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2008
School address	Off Rowan Avenue Dawley Telford
Telephone number	01952 387600
Fax number	01952 591207
Email address	belinda.logan@taw.org.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Inspection number	342180

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' work, tracking of pupils' progress, important policies and the school action plan. In addition, inspectors looked at 29 completed returns of a parental questionnaire sent out by the school in June 2009.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' behaviour and the consistency with which staff use effective behaviour management strategies and provide pupils with a clear code of conduct for them to uphold
- attendance and strategies to ensure a more engaging curriculum for pupils with a wide range of needs
- the effectiveness of curriculum provision for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions, enabling pupils to achieve to the best of their ability
- the use of robust information about pupils' skills and knowledge to inform self-evaluation, set challenging targets and improve teachers' planning
- pupils' knowledge of their own learning and if they are clear about what they need to do to improve their work
- the quality of leadership and management at all levels including the effectiveness of monitoring and feedback arrangements to help improve teaching and how individuals help to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility.

Information about the school

Southall provides education for pupils with moderate learning difficulties from across the local authority. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A growing proportion of pupils have autistic spectrum conditions and just over 14% have behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. Over 90% of pupils are from White British backgrounds and approximately 5% are looked after by the local authority. The school was placed into special measures during the last inspection. The school received an 'Excellence Award' from Shropshire Educational Business Partnership for the work experience provided for all pupils in Year 11 and a 'Gold Apple Award' for a community environment project.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Southall provides a satisfactory education which is rapidly improving. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Pupils at the school make satisfactory progress and a growing proportion are making good progress particularly in science, English, mathematics, art and information and communication technology. Teaching is nearly always satisfactory or better and pupils' increasing rates of progress are closely linked to the rising proportion of good teaching. There is greater challenge in lessons since the last inspection and this, with increasing opportunities for accreditation at Key Stage 4, has enabled more pupils to achieve higher levels. Some teachers are still not adjusting activities and pace during lessons to better suit the pupils' needs or regularly helping pupils reflect on their own learning.

Pupils behave well and are increasingly becoming less dependent on adult support to make positive social choices. Pupils are usually caring towards each other. There has been considerable improvement in behaviour since the last inspection and the way in which pupils are supported in this helps them feel safe and able to learn. Good additional opportunities for sports help pupils develop their fitness and gain a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. The school has worked extremely well with partners to devise a flexible vocational curriculum for pupils who were not attending school frequently enough. This has been highly effective in increasing engagement in education. As a result, this group of pupils have significantly improved their attendance and behaviour, and have higher aspirations about their futures. The attendance for the whole school is above average. As pupils become more confident they are able to benefit from the widening range of opportunities to become involved in the life of the school. The very recent acquisition of a school radio station with all the necessary technology has captured the interest of pupils and enabled some to take a leading role in communication across the school, including interviewing inspectors!

Leaders at the school provide good levels of challenge based on information about pupils' progress. This and information from regular monitoring is used well to inform priorities for development. Actions taken are swift and quickly make a difference. A good example of this are the curriculum and organisational structures introduced this term which have improved progress made by pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. The pupils access the main school curriculum and have additional tailor-made opportunities focussed on their specific learning needs. Improving curriculum arrangements for other pupils with more complex needs is not as well established. Opportunities to help pupils develop a better understanding of different religions and cultures are satisfactory. The developing curriculum is only beginning to ensure pupils learn enough about these

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

aspects and develop an understanding of their community within the context of a wider community. Parents' views about the school are usually positive and those who inspectors met during this inspection were delighted with the improvements in behaviour and communication between home and school, as well as the significantly increased levels of support for families and improved curriculum opportunities for their children. The focus for the school has been on the areas identified for further development when the school was placed in special measures. Governors and the school leadership team have ensured there are suitable arrangements to keep pupils and staff safe and have taken reasonable action to improve the equality of opportunity for all pupils. The robust monitoring of the outcomes from this work is less well-developed. The significant improvements the school has made recently from being in special measures to offering satisfactory education including some aspects that are good, demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning by helping teachers to
 - be more precise about what they want pupils to learn, as well as do, and analyse the balance of social development and academic progress in all lessons
 - use information about pupils' skills and knowledge more effectively during lessons to adjust the activities and levels of active learning
 - involve pupils in reflecting on their own learning more regularly within lessons.
- Build upon the school's knowledge about the community it serves to ensure actions help pupils develop better awareness of different cultures and beliefs alongside a growing understanding of communities outside their school and local area.
- Make sure the policies and actions for improving equality of opportunity and keeping pupils and staff safe provide a good foundation that underpins all improvements in provision and helps to challenge the outcomes for all pupils
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

■ **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

3

Progress is rapidly improving as a result of the increased expectations of staff and better provision in the school. Progress made by pupils is satisfactory and slightly better at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. Pupils make better progress in science than in English and mathematics, although progress made by pupils in all these areas is improving. In lessons observed during the inspection, progress was directly related to the quality of teaching. This is nearly always satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils showed evident enjoyment in their learning as they experienced success. Over time boys tend to make more progress in mathematics than girls, with girls often making better progress than

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

boys in English. Pupils with autistic spectrum conditions are now making progress in line with other groups and some are making good progress across the curriculum. Pupils looked after by the local authority always achieve at least as well as other pupils and sometimes better. Pupils achieve well in a range of accredited awards for example, eight pupils gained the silver award of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme by the end of last academic year. Progress for pupils who were previously not attending regularly has risen sharply since the last inspection. The school rightly identified the need for more functional English and mathematics. The recently introduced skills lessons at the start of each day are beginning to make a good contribution to increasing opportunities for pupils to learn and apply literacy and mathematics skills helping to improve their economic well-being. The quality of opportunities to apply skills is not consistent across tutor groups and there are some missed opportunities to ensure pupils are given opportunities to do this throughout the school day.

Pupils now behave well within school and the good levels of support are helping more pupils to make a positive contribution both in school and in their local community. There have been some good initiatives for example, creating a seating arrangement at a local recreation centre and clearing playgrounds near to where pupils live so that they are safe for young children. Although, there are opportunities for some pupils to take on responsibilities within school this could be further developed. Pupils make good progress in understanding right and wrong and making considerate choices. They have less understanding about different cultures and religions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The relationships between staff and pupils are usually very positive and this is a key contributor to some of the improvements in lessons. Leaders have an improving understanding of what constitutes good teaching. The focus on what pupils are learning has helped to lead developments in the use of assessment and this is now satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons using information about what pupils have previously learnt and when this is adjusted throughout the lesson to meet pupils' needs, learning improves and pupils make good progress. There are still some lessons where the pace or activities are not as well-matched to the pupils' needs. In some lessons there is also insufficient clarity about the next steps in learning to make sure all make the best possible progress. The school has planned a curriculum that has increased opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation across a wider range of subjects and in Key Stage 3 the developing creative curriculum makes some good links across subjects. The school has resisted a 'quick fix' solution for all aspects of the curriculum so that new developments can be evaluated thoroughly before they are developed across the age ranges. There are significant strengths in the additional sports and community based activities at the school which are good and help to support some of the good outcomes for pupils. Targeting care, guidance and support more accurately to meet individual needs has helped to improve outcomes for pupils particularly in their attendance and behaviour. Pupils feel well supported and many are becoming more confident and independent as a result.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The level of challenge offered by leaders has helped to raise expectations of pupils' achievement. As pockets of good practice demonstrate the improvement that is possible

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

more and more staff have raised their aspirations for pupils. All leaders have a much clearer view of areas of strength and areas requiring further development within the school and this is helping to drive the good improvement since the school was placed in special measures.

Engaging more parents with their child's learning is helping to improve both social and academic progress. The workshops for parents of pupils with autistic spectrum conditions and Key Stage 4 options evenings have helped the school to work in partnership with parents as well as share better information about learning. Identifying where pupils require additional support has improved and the school now seeks support from a much wider range of partners. The outcomes for pupils are improving as a result. The governors have been supportive in helping the school to move out of special measures and have ensured they have all the necessary policies and procedures in place. This has made a satisfactory contribution to improving equality of opportunity and keeping pupils and staff safe. The leaders at the school and governors recognise that they need to do more to make sure that the impact of some of the work to promote equality of opportunity, making sure pupils are safe and to promote community cohesion is good.

The school provides satisfactory value for money and is becoming more able to identify where increases in spending are bringing about the best improvements for pupils. The flexible curriculum offer and additional support for an identified group of Key Stage 4 pupils is costly but justified by the improvements made by pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Views of parents and carers

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



3 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southall School, Telford, TF4 3PX

Thank you for welcoming me and my colleagues to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and were very pleased with the improvements at your school. Your school no longer needs special measures. This means I will no longer be visiting your school each term. I am a little sad that I will not be meeting you again or be visiting to see you make even more progress but I know your headteacher and others will keep checking up on this. I have asked the governors as well as the teachers to make sure they check that all the things that they do give you even more opportunities to succeed.

When I first started coming to your school I thought you could all achieve much more. You have shown me during this visit that I was right. Many of your lessons are now more interesting and the support you get from staff is at the right times. I hope you will help your teachers by working hard so that all of you make good progress in all your lessons.

I was especially pleased that you behave well at school. You are frequently looking out for each other and you told me that you now feel safe. In the past some of you have not been very interested in school and so have not come to school frequently enough. The new opportunities that many of you now have to learn about things that are interesting to you means that you attend frequently and you are keen to do well.

I have asked your teachers to make sure all your lessons are like those that you find most interesting and where you make the most progress. I hope you will help by working with staff to look at your work and finding out how you can make it better. I have also asked them to help you learn more about other religions and cultures so that you know more about your own and other communities.

I hope you enjoyed the radio interview. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.