

Broomhill Bank School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 119026 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 358478 |
| Inspection dates | 21–22 September 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | David Marshall |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Foundation special |
| Age range of pupils | 5–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 72 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 23 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mark Holder |
| Headteacher | Emma Leitch |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 September 2010 |
| School address | Broomhill Road Rusthall Tunbridge Wells TN3 0TB |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, and a social care inspector. Eleven lessons and six different teachers were observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior management team, teachers from this school and those from schools supported by the Outreach team, support and administrative staff, governors, parents and pupils. The school's documentation was scrutinised carefully and included school development plans, the tracking of pupils' progress, staff and governor meeting records and safeguarding documentation. In addition, 42 questionnaires from parents and carers, 33 staff questionnaires and 66 pupil questionnaires were analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of the school's assessment and tracking procedures and how well they are used in planning for individual pupils' needs.
- The impact of the school's provision on pupils' personal development.
- How curriculum and additional activities meet individual needs and contribute to overall outcomes for pupils across the whole school.
- How successfully the leaders and managers at all levels are enabling continuity and improvement.

Information about the school

Broomhill Bank has been a Foundation Special School since November 2007, and underwent redesignation in September 2008 from a day and residential all girls special school for learners with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), to a coeducational school for pupils aged 5 to 19 with communication and interaction difficulties (C and I). The school will cease to have residential provision by 2012. All learners have statements of special educational needs. The statements of the remaining MLD cohorts on roll indicate more complex learning and communication needs than the designation would suggest, including autism, language disorders and medical needs. Under the new designation, the primary cohort is currently served on an outreach basis via the school Inclusion and Outreach Project (IOP) team. As part of Extended Schools provision mainstream pupils with C and I are able to access an after-school social club, which operates on site.

Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is also well below the national average. There are two children in care on roll.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Broomhill Bank is an outstanding special school that is highly effective in meeting the complex and diverse needs of its pupils. The school's mission statement is summed up in its maxim – 'Preparation for life'. In this, it is outstandingly successful. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. One parent commented, 'Broomhill Bank is a wonderful school. My daughter is extremely happy at school and feels safe and secure. The staff are caring and supportive (this includes the kitchen staff and caretaker etc). My daughter's needs are met appropriately and she has thrived in this happy, calm environment. I cannot speak highly enough of this outstanding school.' This was typical of almost all of the comments received and is completely accurate. Pupils progress extremely well at the school, demonstrating significant improvements in their communication skills, improving their social skills and, for those for whom it is appropriate, showing extraordinary improvement in their challenging behaviour.

Teaching is never less than good and, in most instances, is outstanding. Teachers plan comprehensively to meet the individual needs of pupils and they deploy the many additional adults in the classroom expertly so that all pupils can flourish at a level that is appropriate for them. The school is continuing to develop its already exemplary use of a range of assessment data so that the pupils' progress across a variety of complex needs can be systematically demonstrated. There is good recording, clear target setting and reviews completed in a timely fashion with the involvement of both education and care staff.

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All those who receive support from the school's Inclusion and Outreach Project enthusiastically value its work. Currently, the team is involved with supporting primary and secondary school age pupils in 12 different schools. They work with groups of pupils and in doing so train staff in other schools to be able to offer a much higher level of support than before. Comments from the schools they serve are unfailingly positive. As one teacher said, 'They are a wonderful resource which has a beneficial effect on all pupils.' Their work with the after-school club, again drawn from local primary schools, is hugely appreciated. As one pupil observed, 'It helps me make the most of my life.'

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The school's engagement and communication with its parents and carers are outstanding. The headteacher and her senior team provide very strong leadership in engaging external partnerships and developing an ethos of continuous improvements, through a keen focus on self-evaluation. The school has been through a difficult period of change, but has continued to improve since the last inspection and now demonstrates an excellent capacity to continue this improvement. The school's careful audit of community cohesion clearly illustrates how much it achieves in preparing pupils for the outside world. While links with the local community are excellent, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom are still being developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by:
 - instigating the findings of its recent analysis of the school's context
 - implementing its plans to link with schools in other localities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils' attainment on entry is very low compared with other learners of the same age because of their special educational and complex needs. From day one, pupils participate exceptionally well in all learning activities. For example, putting the new Year 7 pupils with Year 8 has created mutual understanding through being role models that they all enjoy and respect. The acting out of their Hansel and Gretel stories outside was a joyous occasion enjoyed by all.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. They maintain a high level of self-esteem and dignity due to the excellent relationships they have with adults and the sensitive way in which their needs are met through one-to-one interventions. The pupils make excellent progress with their life skills as the outstanding curriculum provides an extensive range of opportunities to develop them, for example through off-site visits and visitors to school. Pupils respond extremely well to encouragement to maintain a healthy lifestyle in relation to diet, exercise and emotional development. Pupils feel extremely safe and learn how to protect themselves during practical work.

Within the context of the pupils' needs, they make excellent contributions to their own and the wider community through selling produce, 'Butties' and bracelets in the community. They are encouraged to include fund raising, work experience and community activity in their coursework. Careful planning ensures pupils concentrate on literacy and mathematics across the school, which helps their development of basic skills to enhance their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 1 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | * |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 1 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 1 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

As all lesson observations showed, careful planning enables all pupils to make excellent progress. All staff work together highly cohesively as a team. The work of teaching assistants is outstanding and they give careful and sensitive support to pupils in lessons. Lessons are always conducted in a peaceful and industrious atmosphere and learning moves on at a fast pace. Teachers always give clear instructions and explanations and make particularly good use of signs and symbols to involve pupils and to make their meaning clear.

An outstanding science lesson with the Years 7 and 8 pupils was a good example of how effective all lessons are. The session began with the teacher focusing on pupils' homework and enabling them to share what they had learned. Every pupil was involved at their own level of ability. This moved on without stopping to the aims of the lesson and then an examination of the seven fundamentals of living creatures. The acting that emerged had to be seen to be believed. The level of excitement and involvement was highly impressive.

The excellent curriculum ensures inclusion is central to all planning. Creativity across all aspects promotes pupils' enjoyment and their improving communication skills. The art work on display around the school, and in pupils' own portfolios, is incredible. Pupils are

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.

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constantly inspired to make their own collages and paintings, and their progress and outcomes are outstanding. Staff ensure older pupils' individual interests are harnessed, to raise self-esteem, independence and confidence, so improving learning. The curriculum gives emphasis to everyday skills such as communication, empathy for others and working together, as demonstrated in the student council meeting. Links with the wider community are extremely well developed. There is excellent provision available both on the school site and from the school accessing the resources of the wider community.

Pupils are given countless opportunities to express their opinions and they have the means to communicate so any issues or concerns they may have can be addressed through various channels. Pupils' views and opinions are valued and are used to effect change around the school and residential areas.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 1 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, drive and ambition to sustain an excellent capacity to improve. This, in partnership with the very effective deputy headteacher, ensures that complacency is not tolerated. Teamwork is excellent and everyone, including the administrative team and caretaking staff, are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. Staff are focused relentlessly on further improvement and work brilliantly together. As one staff member wrote, reflecting the views of almost all, 'An exceptional school, led by an exceptional headteacher. A school where I feel valued, listened to, and where I am able to make contributions at all levels.'

The school knows itself very well and its evaluation of its work is honest and accurate. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging but supportive manner. Its focus on improvement through the difficult period of redesignation has enabled the school to thrive in all directions.

Excellent attention is paid by managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safety and care for the pupils. Pupils' safety and well-being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. Pupils are further protected by rigorous staff recruitment and selection procedures, which show a careful vetting and a robust selection process being undertaken. The senior managers,

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supported well by all staff, are effective in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination for all pupils across all aspects of the school's work. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. The school is in the process of implementing its plans for greater national links in order to raise this aspect of community cohesion to the outstanding level of the rest of its provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Sixth form

The outstanding curriculum in the sixth form meets the students' diverse range of needs and abilities exceptionally well. It is very carefully planned and varied, with the many experiences required to move the students towards being independent adults. As a result, the students reach outstanding levels of performance, particularly in relation to life skills. Opportunities to involve all students in work outside school, in the local community and with other schools, such as selling soap and plants and well-made jewellery in the local markets, show just how exceptional the school's work is. Students' attendance at residential courses to develop further their independence and to encourage them to 'try things for the first time' is a highlight of their year.

The school's consistently high expectations of all students are maintained in the sixth form. It continues to search for courses that will allow further accreditation and breadth, and courses are tailored for the individual needs of each student. In 2009-2010, every student completed at least one work-related placement, and all students successfully completed at least one Further Education Department certified course, with the large majority completing at least four. The school is aiming to increase the opportunities even further, and courses and taster sessions at local colleges are being developed in

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vocational areas. These eventual moves to college are very carefully planned.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. Nothing is ever too much trouble and the way that resources have been consistently improved since the last inspection has meant that the students have made even better progress. This shows the staff's high level of commitment and the sixth form's outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 1 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 1 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 1 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and the headteacher leads and manages it very well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and that their children make outstanding progress. Inspectors fully endorse these views. There were no particular patterns in the very few negative comments received by inspectors. The very small number of parental criticisms were offered constructively, and were discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Broomhill Bank School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 28 | 67 | 12 | 29 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 35 | 83 | 7 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 22 | 52 | 20 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 20 | 48 | 20 | 48 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 25 | 60 | 17 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 24 | 57 | 18 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 24 | 57 | 18 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 26 | 62 | 15 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 25 | 60 | 16 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 25 | 60 | 14 | 33 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 25 | 60 | 15 | 36 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 26 | 62 | 15 | 36 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 33 | 79 | 9 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



23 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broomhill Bank School, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 0TB

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is an outstanding school with many strengths. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- The school looks after you very carefully and you all achieve extremely well by the time you leave the school.
- You behave excellently, get along with each other and feel very safe in school.
- You have very good ideas about how to make things better and you have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do, in school, on visits and in clubs.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school extremely well.

Even in excellent schools, some things can be made better. I have asked the teachers to make sure that you are given the chance to look at and understand about how children and adults live in places in the United Kingdom that are different from where you live.

I am sure you will all continue to enjoy your time at Broomhill Bank and carry on making excellent progress in your learning.

Finally, we would like to thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead inspector

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