

Brackenfield Special School

Bracken Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham, NG10 4DA

Inspection dates 8–9 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement across the school is good. From low starting points they make good progress, particularly in mathematics reading and communication skills, and in their personal development.
- Pupils very quickly respond to the school's exceptionally positive ways of working and have good attitudes to their learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. All leaders are committed to improving the quality of teaching. Good monitoring of teaching and professional development of staff have increased the levels of consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school and behave well in lessons and around school. Relationships between staff and pupils are consistently positive and supportive.
- Pupils who have behavioural difficulties are well supported through their individual behaviour plans.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders know their school well, have driven improvement and have good plans in place to support the school to move further forward.
- Partnerships with parents, carers and families make a good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The wide and rich learning activities meets the needs of the pupils very well. These enable pupils to achieve accredited outcomes and make good progress in developing their social skills.
- The governing body provides good support and challenge. They are well informed and are committed to continuing school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make exceptional progress.
- There is insufficient consistency in marking of pupils' work to develop their understanding of their next steps in learning and the level they have achieved.
- Not all teaching gives opportunities for pupils to learn independently.
- Subject leaders as yet are not fully involved in monitoring and reviewing the quality of teaching in their subject.

Information about this inspection

- All teachers were seen teaching in the 12 lessons inspectors visited.
- Inspectors met with pupils, staff, representatives of the governing body, and held discussions with the local authority representative.
- Pupils' work, teachers' planning and a range of the school's documentation were examined. This included records relating to pupil's progress and accreditation.
- A telephone conversation was held with one of the school's off-site providers.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by three parents and carers using the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the school's survey of parents' and carers' views and responses to annual progress reports. In addition, the responses of the staff survey were taken into account.

Inspection team

Kathy Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Mosley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brackenfield is a small special school for pupils with a range of learning difficulties and complex needs. All pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils have moderate learning difficulties, and a minority have severe learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional needs including speech, language and communication difficulties and behavioural difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder has increased since the previous inspection.
- Since September 2012, the school has made provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school works with off-site providers to extend the range of learning experiences for Key Stage 4 pupils.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding provided by the government, is well above average.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British with very few from other ethnic backgrounds.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportions of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - there is consistency in marking pupils' work to support pupils' understanding and ownership of their next steps in learning and the level of work they have achieved
 - there is consistency in the opportunities for pupils to learn independently
 - the role of the subject leader in monitoring and helping senior leaders to evaluate the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is extended.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All pupils enter the school with low starting points. Pupils' progress data since the last inspection indicates that they make good progress over time. Rates of progress over the past academic year have improved as a result of more focused planning to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- School data on progress shows that pupils across the range of learning needs all make similarly good rates of progress, including pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, communication and language needs and those with severe learning difficulties.
- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. A clear focus on literacy skills ensures that pupils make good progress from their low starting points. The introduction of a programme for teaching letters and their sounds (phonics) in the primary department has been effective in supporting pupils' reading skills and improving their confidence and good progress in reading.
- Pupils make good progress in communication, language and literacy as a result of close work between the speech therapist, teachers and support staff.
- Pupils at Key Stage 4 make good progress in a wide range of vocational courses and successfully achieve challenging accredited outcomes. This includes pupils who attend off-site provision who benefit from opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills they learn in school and develop their social and work-place skills.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been on roll since September. Early indications are they are making good progress in each of the areas of learning.
- Pupils receiving support through pupil premium make equally good progress as others because of the additional support provided by teaching and support staff. This is based on good use of information about what they already know and can do to ensure the communication, reading and writing tasks are matched closely to their individual needs.
- There is good progress in pupils' personal and social development. The pupils gain effective communication skills and develop these in a wide variety of situations both in and out of school. This has a positive impact on their good achievement.
- Parents' and carers' responses to the school's annual progress report agree that their children are making good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good with some outstanding practice evident. Teachers nearly always have high expectations and use their knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses to plan lessons which challenge each individual to do well. Because of the strong improvements in planning, the rates of progress made in the last year by pupils, including those in receipt of pupil premium, have increased.
- The well planned and carefully tailored range of learning opportunities ensures that most teaching is lively, interesting and challenging. As a result, pupils respond positively and enjoy their learning.

- A key strength in teaching is the highly effective collaboration between teachers and other adults in lessons. The school's skilled teaching assistants know individual pupils very well and make a strong contribution to the typically good learning in lessons.
- Lessons are well structured and information about what pupils learn is clearly communicated. This effectively supports pupils' good engagement and pace because they understand clearly what they are trying to achieve.
- Teachers regularly check on how much progress pupils are making by asking questions and by giving verbal feedback. However, written feedback in pupils' work is not consistent in supporting pupils to know what level they are working at and what their next steps in learning should be.
- Reading and writing are effectively supported in most lessons by both teachers and their assistants. This is because reading and writing tasks are carefully tailored to the needs of each pupil. As a result, most pupils make good progress.
- The vast majority of parents and carers agree that the school is a welcoming place and the teaching is good. Parents and carers particularly commented positively on the improvements in their child's confidence in learning to read and progress in their social skills.
- Where teaching is outstanding, pupils have consistent and planned opportunities to learn independently. This enables them to take greater ownership of their own learning and make faster rates of progress. In one lesson observed, pupils enjoyed independently planning to furnish a flat on a budget allocated to them. This focus on independent learning successfully supported all the group in making exceptional progress towards achieving external accreditation in personal and social development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good both in and outside lessons. They have a high level of respect for their teachers and support staff, and consistently show good levels of caring towards each other.
- Pupils feel that the school keeps them safe, and this is endorsed by parents and carers. Regular anti-bullying sessions have supported pupils well in their understanding of this area and in reducing occurrences in school. Incidents are few and dealt with very effectively by staff.
- A calm atmosphere is promoted from the very start of the school day. Pupils arrive in an orderly manner and are eager to greet staff and other pupils. Those who can make their way to their class independently.
- The positive way in which different groups of pupils conduct themselves around school indicates that they feel safe around one another and that they trust adults. The good behaviour presented by autistic pupils shows that they are settled in their environment and feel secure within it. They manage their behaviour well with other pupils both in class and on the playground.
- The school's emphasis on enabling pupils to more effectively manage their own behaviour is working well. Where pupils have significant behaviour issues, there is strong evidence that their behaviour improves over time and that they make good progress. This includes pupils who attend off-site provision and who benefit from good support and guidance to sustain their attendance, participation and success.
- The school site, equipment and resources are well planned to make sure that pupils are as safe

as they can be. Pupils play well together and enjoy their free time with their friends.

- Attendance has significantly improved since the last inspection and is now in line with national averages.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has focused sharply on improving the quality of teaching. He has used procedures for the performance management of teachers and training opportunities effectively. There is now no inadequate teaching and there has been an increase in the amount of good and outstanding teaching over the past year.
- The school effectively analyses pupil progress information to ensure that timely interventions are put in place for pupils to achieve their targets. This includes targeted intervention, where appropriate, for pupils in receipt of pupil premium.
- The school works exceptionally well with parents and carers and goes out of its way to build good relationships. Parent and carer surveys show that they would recommend the school to others. There has been a strong focus on supporting parents' and carers' understanding through training in key areas of communication and behaviour. This has enabled them to feel more confident in supporting their child's needs at home.
- The stimulating curriculum is effectively matched to the needs of all groups of learners. It enables pupils to fully engage and enjoy their learning. The school's effective partnership with its off-site providers supports pupils' progress to further education and the world of work well.
- The school caters well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Social and moral developments are successfully integrated into all learning opportunities and support pupils' good progress in these areas.
- Subject leaders are involved in the monitoring of planning and improving the quality of the curriculum in their area of responsibility. Their leadership has impacted positively on good improvements in planning and the delivery of an engaging range of learning experiences. However, they are not fully involved in monitoring the quality of teaching in their subjects and helping senior staff and members of the governing body to evaluate the impact this has on pupils' progress.
- The local authority knows the school well and has given tailored support to match the needs of the school. This has been effective in supporting improvements since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school's strengths and weaknesses and is fully behind the headteacher's continued drive for improvement. Governors are regularly involved in visits to the school and meet with subject leaders to monitor key aspects of the school's provision. The governing body recognises improvements in the quality of teaching; its members understand and fulfil their responsibilities in linking staff pay to performance. The governing body ensures that the school meets statutory safeguarding requirements and that the finances in the school are well managed. The use of the pupil premium funding and the impact this is having on pupils' achievement is evaluated and is kept under review by the governing body.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113031
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401333

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Sambrook
Headteacher	Julian Scholefield
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2010
Telephone number	0115 973 3710
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Email address	headteacher@brackenfield.derbyshire.sch.uk

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