

Granta School

Cambridge Road, Linton, Cambridge, CB21 4NN

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress. The progress of pupils and students in other parts of the school is good.
- The sixth form is good and students achieve well.
- Pupils gain the essential basic skills of communication and numeracy well. Their personal and social development is outstanding.
- Teaching is good. Pupils benefit greatly from work that is usually precisely matched to their particular learning needs.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils strive to do their best. They are rightly proud of their school and of their achievements.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body work effectively to bring about improvements; including, since the previous inspection, improvements to the quality of teaching and to pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a minority of lessons, the pace of learning slows. This happens when teachers do not give enough thought to ensuring the work set is exactly right for the pupils.
- Some teachers do not give pupils enough information about how to improve their work.
- Not all teachers and teaching assistants are up to speed in using assessment information to guide their planning of pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 lessons or parts of lessons. All lessons were observed in the company of the headteacher or a member of the school’s senior management team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the school’s senior management team, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work. They took account of the school’s information about pupils’ progress, its self-evaluation and plans for future improvements. Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation and policies concerned with the management of the school and with keeping pupils safe.
- The inspectors considered 15 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the 42 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Melvyn Blackband

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This special school caters for pupils from across Cambridgeshire and a small number from other local authorities.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- Pupils have a range of complex difficulties and educational needs. Many pupils have profound and multiple learning needs. Some pupils are on the autistic spectrum and some have emotional and behavioural difficulties, including some who are prone to violent outbursts. Some pupils, because of their illnesses, are likely to have a limited lifespan. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium, which includes those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part of the way through their education is much higher than is found in the majority of schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the pace of learning is fast enough in all lessons by:
 - always matching work precisely to the stage that pupils have reached and giving full consideration to what they need to learn next
 - planning learning in short bursts that enable pupils to sustain their concentration
 - returning to activities to reinforce pupils' learning and ensuring they have grasped the main features of what they are meant to learn.
- Make certain that teachers provide pupils with all the information they need about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work by:
 - following the guidance provided by senior leaders about how to mark pupils' work
 - always talking to pupils to get their views about how well they think they are getting on.
- Make sure that all teachers and teaching assistants are up to speed in using assessment information to provide a basis for planning pupils' learning by:
 - providing further training to help teachers and teaching assistants to understand what this information is telling them about the progress that pupils are making
 - making sure that this information is readily available and easy to check
 - providing this information in such a way that it creates a record of pupils' progress, over their time in the school, that is helpful and easily understood by pupils and their parents.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that is invariably low in relation to that expected for their age. In some years, attainment at this point is very low. During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make outstanding progress in all areas of their learning.
- A pattern of consistently good progress is evident across the school in Key Stages 1 to 4 and in the sixth form. Throughout the school, pupils make exceptional progress in their personal and social development, which lays a solid foundation for their good academic progress. Pupils also make outstanding progress in their physical development.
- Pupils throughout the school gain the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy well. Pupils also make good progress in their reading. This is because the sounds made by letters and words are taught in ways that suit the many and varied styles in which pupils are able to learn. The approach to teaching reading and writing in the sixth form ensures that students' progress is sustained and they are prepared as well as possible for the next stage of their education and training.
- Progress for students in the sixth form is good and all students who left in the summer of 2012 entered training or employment. This is a pattern that has been sustained over recent years.
- Pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals and others who benefit from the pupil premium also make good progress from their various starting points, to the extent that their rate of progress is enabling them to catch up with pupils from other groups. These pupils benefit from frequent individual tuition and from working in small groups.
- Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those whose lifespan may well be limited, make outstanding progress from invariably very low starting points, especially in their personal, social and physical development. Those pupils who are on the autistic spectrum and those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties also do well, with many exceeding the rate of progress that might reasonably be expected of them.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. There are also pockets of outstanding teaching in other parts of the school. For example, outstanding teaching is found in art and design, physical education, the teaching of letter and word sounds to pupils in Years 1 and 2 and the teaching of mathematics to students in Years 7, 8 and 9. Most lessons engage pupils' interest well, resulting in them showing interest, working hard and doing their best. Teaching in the sixth form is good.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers prepare work that is matched precisely to the learning needs of each pupil. However, in a minority of lessons for older pupils, the pace of progress sometimes slows down when teachers do not give enough consideration to the stage that pupils have reached or to the skills and knowledge they have grasped during previous lessons.
- Most teachers work effectively to promote pupils' progress in gaining the basic skills of communication, numeracy and information and communication technology. Usually, teachers

build thoughtfully and steadily on pupils' previous learning. However, there are isolated occasions when teachers do not pay enough attention to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills in ways that sustain progress. For example, there are times when they too readily provide pupils with answers to questions. On other occasions, with older pupils, there are too few opportunities for students to talk amongst themselves and discuss the possible answers to questions.

- Most teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the increasingly good progress made by those pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium. This often takes the form of supporting individual pupils and usually focuses on helping them to acquire the basic skills of communication and numeracy.
- The majority of teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and frequently. However, for a small minority this is not the case. A few teachers have not fully embraced the school's guidance for marking pupils' work. While there are many examples of excellent and helpful marking, the approach to marking across the school is inconsistent.
- In a minority of cases, some teachers and teaching assistants are not sufficiently up to speed in accessing and using the wide range of available information about how well pupils are making progress. Some of this information is not in a form that makes it easy enough for staff to access and interpret. Neither is information readily available to give pupils and their parents a clear picture of the progress made as pupils move up from year to year.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave exceptionally well during lessons and around the school. They are very enthusiastic learners and invariably try their best. They appreciate that their achievements and efforts are celebrated and value the rewards they receive for working hard.
- Pupils, despite the significant challenges they face, show great care, support and respect towards each other. They are also full of praise for the support they receive from adults. Pupils say they feel well cared for and safe in school; a view that is endorsed by their parents. The care and support that pupils receive from adults is of the highest quality. Pupils who are new to the school are helped to settle in quickly and become at ease with their new setting. This is especially so of pupils who have moved to Granta because they failed to thrive in other special schools.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of bullying in its various forms. Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe. For example, some older pupils have a good understanding of the potential dangers posed by the misuse of mobile telephones and computers.
- Pupils are eager to help around the school and relish opportunities to take responsibility. Members of the school council are proud of the ways in which their voice is heard and they can influence the work of the school. For example, they were recently consulted in the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.
- Staff are highly skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. They know the pupils well and invariably anticipate and, consequently, defuse instances of potentially inappropriate behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants are particularly sensitive and skilful in minimising the impact of the behaviour of those pupils who are prone to violent outbursts.
- Attendance is broadly average when compared with that in all other schools and above that for

most special schools. This is a remarkable achievement given the illnesses that many pupils face.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body provide strong leadership that, since the previous inspection, has brought significant improvements in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. These developments illustrate the capacity of the school to sustain improvement in the future. Even so, leaders are not complacent and are eager for the school to become even better. Target setting, based on accurate information about pupils' progress, is ambitious and challenging. The leadership of the sixth form is good and that of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. It is also suitably critical, in that the findings from self-evaluation provide the basis for subsequent plans for continued improvement. This currently includes the introduction of new guidance about marking pupils' work and further developing the role of subject leaders. The majority of staff have embraced these initiatives and they are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, a small minority have not responded quickly enough to the need to include these developments in their work.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching are promoted effectively. They are also tied in suitably with national guidance about the standards of teaching and with the rewards that are available to recognise the quality of teachers' work.
- Teachers benefit from good opportunities for continued professional development. This includes essential courses to keep them informed about important areas of their work, such as pupils' safety and well-being. In their responses to the staff questionnaire, a number of teaching assistants said they would welcome more opportunities for training to enhance their skills.
- The local authority is supporting the school well in its push to sustain improvements. The link adviser provides a sounding board for the headteacher to discuss ideas. Help is also being provided to evaluate the impact of new initiatives to further improve pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The school provides outreach work and guidance at the request of neighbouring schools about how best to support pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities. This work is invariably appreciated and received well.
- Pupils at all stages benefit from a range of subjects, courses, additional activities and specially tailored provision that promotes their learning well. The range of activities provided for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Throughout the school, provision for pupils' personal development is outstanding. The acquisition of basic skills is nurtured with care. This includes, for example, highly effective strategies to promote pupils' understanding of personal finance and to help them cope when they leave school. Older students and those in the sixth form benefit greatly from opportunities to gain a good range of qualifications, follow vocational courses, take part in work experience and from the chance to learn alongside students attending the village college that shares the same site.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well through art, music and sport. Sport has a particularly high profile and pupils have excelled in national competitions. Pupils are rightly proud of their links with a school in Mozambique and of their highly successful participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Some pupils have remarkable knowledge about people who come from different backgrounds and ethnic groups and have beliefs that differ from their own.

■ The school works strongly with parents as partners in their children's education. Parents have very positive views of the school's work. Every parent who responded to the online questionnaire said they would be happy to recommend the school. The 'Friends of Granta School' provides considerable support for purchasing resources and for school events.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body does a good job. Its members are regular visitors and are well informed about all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and what data shows about pupils' progress. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet current requirements in full. Governors are involved well in holding the school to account for the quality of its work and in checking on the performance of the headteacher and other staff. They are meticulous in ensuring that the available resources are used to good effect and that finances are spent wisely. Governors also evaluate the impact of resources, such as the pupil premium, and are clear that this additional funding is helping those entitled to it to improve their progress and to participate fully in additional activities and educational visits.

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	134937
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	406577

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Illot
Headteacher	Lucie Calow
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2010
Telephone number	01223 896890
Fax number	01223 896890
Email address	office@granta.cambs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 assesses 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 0300 123 4234, 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 information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

