

Rainbow School for Children with Autism

Spencer Park, 48 North Side, Wandsworth Common, London, SW18 2SL

Inspection dates 10–12 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Pupils make good progress in achieving their individual targets for academic subjects, personal development, and independent living.
- They make good progress in improving their behaviour, especially in view of the difficulties they experience as a result of the impact of autism on their lives.
- Teachers and tutors make very good use of their expertise in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) to support and enable improvements to occur in pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Pupils and their parents and carers experience the school as a safe and nurturing learning environment where they are protected from danger and harassment.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, with support from the governors, has maintained the quality of all areas of provision, including teaching and pupils' achievements, since the last inspection while extending the school's age range and pupil numbers.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Not all premises and accommodation regulations are met. Facilities for students to shower are not provided for the secondary department.
- Outcomes of lesson observations are not yet integrated into the staff appraisal process.
- There are some weaknesses in a few lessons with groups of pupils where they are not always challenged to realise their full potential.
- The Trustees are still improving arrangements for checking on the implementation of health and safety procedures.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards').

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by eight different teachers, looked at pupils' work, and held meetings with the headteacher, members of the board of trustees and governing body, staff members and pupils. He also met with parents and carers.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress, monitoring reports of teaching, and staff appraisal and training records.
- The views of 10 parents and carers were taken into account, together with those of the local authorities who place pupils at the school.
- Fifty one questionnaire responses from staff were evaluated.

Inspection team

John Gush, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rainbow School is an independent day special school situated on two sites in the London Borough of Wandsworth, in South West London.
- It opened in 2000, moved to the current site in 2002 and was registered in 2003. In 2011 the school opened its secondary department.
- It now provides education for up to 64 pupils aged between four and 19 years. Currently there are 41 pupils on roll aged between five and 15 years of whom seven are girls.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs related to autistic spectrum disorder and related communication needs. The pupils are referred and funded by local authorities.
- The school uses a local swimming pool, local parks and other community facilities such as libraries.
- The school aims to reduce challenging behaviour to allow pupils access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to give pupils the learning skills they need to achieve their academic potential. To do this, it offers a 'structured programme of intensive intervention' which is supported by the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and a programme of Verbal Behaviour development (VB). This intervention focuses primarily on developing functional communication and language acquisition and encompasses social, play and independent skills.
- The school has a very high number of staff.
- The school was last inspected in May 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Teachers should:
 - improve the quality of teaching in a few lessons with groups of pupils of different ability so that all pupils, especially the more able, make consistently good progress
 - improve the quality of marking using National Curriculum levels and further developing the moderation arrangements for assessing pupils' work
 - further develop the curriculum in the secondary department so that it fully meets the needs of all pupils throughout this age range.
- Leaders and managers should:
 - continue to improve the monitoring arrangements in checking the implementation of the health and safety procedures
 - improve performance management by integrating the outcomes of lesson observations into staff appraisal processes.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
 - The proprietor must ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23A(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils are able to make good progress because of good teaching and a curriculum that includes the specialist features associated with ABA and VB as well as National Curriculum subjects. Achievement is not outstanding because there are some weaknesses in the quality of a few 'group lessons' involving pupils of different abilities where pupils, especially the more able, are not always challenged to realise their full potential.

Pupils receive consistent individual support from tutors who are fully trained in the techniques of ABA and VB and this helps them to make the most of their capabilities and to progress through the early developmental stages that many have missed as a result of their autism. Pupils mostly achieve well in their daily lessons and in developing skills in literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils make up ground quickly both in terms of academic results and in their confidence and willingness to learn.

Pupils take an active part in their group and one-to-one lessons. Most work hard at the activities suggested by their ABA tutors and engage well with the subject content in their group lessons. They take pride in their work and are very effective users of information and communication technology (ICT). They learn ICT skills throughout the school and use their skills well, both to extend their learning of other subjects and as a reward for attending well.

In the secondary department pupils also prepare for nationally accredited qualifications using the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). In 2013, 16 pupils gained their first ASDAN certificates for the module, 'Knowing How'. Their acquisition of basic skills and the effective way in which they develop their personal qualities equip them well for their next stage of their education and for adult life.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour is good. It is not outstanding because occasionally learning is interrupted by impulsive outbursts. Pupils say that they like coming to school and that they enjoy their lessons and activities. Generally the school is a business-like learning environment. Pupils work hard to overcome the volatile impulses that many regularly experience and in this they are ably helped and supported by the well-trained and dedicated teachers and ABA tutors. Their diligent attention to detailed behaviour plans and consistent interventions that reinforce appropriate behaviour enable pupils to make progress in their behaviour that one parent or carer described as 'profound'. Another parent or carer described the improvement in the behaviour of her son in the following way: 'He has learned how to behave calmly, how to wait for the things he wants, and crucially how to ask for things, rather than just scream or hit out.'

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The whole staff team promote an ethos of understanding and mutual respect very well. This supports pupils in adopting these attitudes in their own lives and helps them to become more self-confident. Through weekly assemblies they gain a good awareness of other cultures, hearing stories from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. They celebrate a range of festivals, such as Diwali, and some dress up in the appropriate costumes. These activities promote pupils' awareness of other cultures and help them to develop an attitude of tolerance towards difference.

The school helps pupils to learn about British institutions and services through the subject content in their English lessons as well as through visits to the police station where some pupils have met the police dogs. There have also been visits to the local fire station. Pupils develop very good relations with the local community through their use of local amenities, for example the local supermarkets, libraries and parks. The school has developed a policy to ensure that, whenever it is

appropriate to introduce political issues, balanced views are promoted.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and it enables pupils to make good progress in their one-to-one sessions and mostly in group-learning lessons. It is not outstanding because, although individual programmes are well planned and take account of pupils' capabilities, a few group-work lessons do not fully engage and challenge all pupils. Teachers and ABA tutors consistently demonstrate and model high and appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve and they manage individuals' behaviour very well. They make effective use a range of valuable methods to support communication, including signing, the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) as well as spoken language, helping pupils overcome specific barriers to learning, to make the most of their capability, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' abilities are assessed at the beginning of their placement and regularly thereafter. Detailed analysis of developments in behaviour are used to construct individual plans, which are rigorously monitored by the ABA tutors who support and enable gradual progress and improvement to take place. Regular and effective assessment of pupils' academic abilities takes account of all National Curriculum subjects as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and development in the primary department. These assessments are mostly used well to plan the group-work lessons, which most pupils have twice each day. In the best lessons individual targets as well as a wide range of approaches are used to enable the pupils to progress. For example, during an English lesson in the primary department, pupils were able to experience the phonetic sound for 'f' in song, story and speech, to follow the shape on textured paper and develop the skill required to copy it with a pencil, and to progress from matching models to matching pictures.

Teachers and tutors make good use of their subject knowledge, as well as their expert knowledge of autism and the methods associated with ABA, to enthuse and inspire pupils. They regularly make use of ICT to stimulate learning. They mark pupils' work regularly using a consistent marking policy that identifies the level of support made available as well as praising effort and reinforcing the learning achieved. Since the last inspection they have developed new and effective procedures for allocating National Curriculum levels to students' performance in the various subjects. The school is currently developing its moderation procedures in checking assessments to bring additional rigour to this process.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The school has developed a good curriculum that effectively blends the procedures of VB with National Curriculum subjects and the learning goals in the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning. The curriculum helps pupils to achieve well and make the most of their capacity for speech and, in so doing, reduces the frustration the pupils have with their experience of autism. The curriculum is not outstanding because some elements of the senior school curriculum are not yet fully developed. For example, although aspects of the personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) are well designed and provide an effective framework for helping all pupils learn about keeping safe and to cope appropriately in social situations, it is only just being extended to meet some of the developmental needs of adolescent boys.

Good attention is paid to the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs. The curriculum and the way that it is implemented ensure that they are fulfilled. Occupational therapy and speech and language therapists provide expert interventions for the pupils as well as advising teachers and tutors. Physical education takes place at a local swimming pool and is supplemented by other outdoor education activities, such as football and basketball skills which pupils enjoy. The provision has a good impact on improving individuals' health and fitness. Regular outings, such as to museums and local places of interest, extend the pupils' knowledge and interest in their locality and in the world at large.

The regular use of cross-curricular links supports learning well and makes the pupils' experience more meaningful. For example, during the inspection written and verbal literacy was consistently reinforced in all activities and mathematics skills were developed during an ICT lesson. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) messages were strongly underpinned during a shopping trip for older pupils learning independent living skills when strong and effective emphasis was placed on safely crossing the road. Appropriate advice about future options is provided for pupils in the secondary department through lessons, the review process and visits from advisers. In addition, some pupils are currently preparing for work-experience placements.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. It is characterised by a high level of commitment to pupils' well-being and care, and all the regulations for independent schools are met. It is not outstanding because, although the school has a full range of effective health and safety policies which are well used to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils, the Trustees and Governors have identified that they can further improve the way that they make checks on the implementation of these procedures.

Risk assessments, including those for visits outside school, are thorough. The behaviour management and anti-bullying policies are clear and detailed. The manner in which they are put into practice, together with effective and vigilant supervision, ensures that pupils are safe in school. The pupils experience the school as a supportive and caring environment and confidently place their trust in the teachers and tutors. Parents and carers very much appreciate the efforts that the school makes to support pupils' development, and say that their children feel safe and free from any bullying or harassment while they are in school.

Staff recruitment and checks on staff suitability to work with children are carried out in a thorough manner and the required single central register is correctly maintained. Staff training in child protection and first aid is thorough, and is regularly updated within the recommended timescales. This includes suitable training, at the appropriate higher level, for both of the designated safeguarding officers. Fire safety is good. Fire drills are routinely carried out and fire-fighting equipment is subject to regular inspection. Portable equipment is suitably checked by a competent person and outcomes of the checks are formally recorded. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained.

Pupils are very well supported to adopt a healthy lifestyle. This covers not only developing pupils' awareness of the importance of eating and exercising well but also involves sex and relationships education for older pupils, together with the importance of keeping safe when using the internet.

Leadership and management

Good

The leadership and management of the school are good and have a good impact in ensuring that pupils achieve well. The provision of excellent accommodation and resources in the senior department and rapid increase in pupil numbers have been possible because the whole staff team shares the high expectations of the headteacher and Trustees.

Self-evaluation is accurate and the school's leaders know what is needed to continue to increase the quality of the provision. However, leadership and management are not outstanding because leaders have not ensured that the more-able pupils are always challenged enough. In addition, some arrangements to ensure improvements in pupils' outcomes are not as effective they could be. For example, although senior managers observe teachers' lessons and helpful suggestions for improvement are made, this information is not yet linked into the staff appraisal process.

The Trustees have provided first-rate premises and facilities to help the pupils achieve their goals, especially new accommodation for the secondary department. Although these do not currently provide showering facilities, plans are already in hand to remedy this shortcoming. Classrooms are well maintained and of a good size. Specialist teaching areas include appropriate facilities for occupational therapy and a well-equipped food technology area. Appropriate equipment for science teaching is available and very good arrangements for ICT are available.

All the required information for parents, carers and others is provided or made available through the school's brochure and information packs or on the Trustee's very informative website. Parents and carers are unanimous in their positive views about the school and the way it enables pupils to make good progress in their learning and their personal development. The complaints procedure meets requirements and is implemented well with information about making complaints readily available to parents and carers.

The proprietor has ensured that all but one of the regulations for independent schools are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	134145
Inspection number	422759
DfE registration number	212/6405

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school for autistic pupils
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	5–15
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	BeyondAutism
Chair	Charlie Horrell
Headteacher	Sally Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 May 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£51,712 to £64,499
Telephone number	0203 031 9700
Email address	rainbowschool@beyondatautism.co.uk

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 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.

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

