

Doubletrees School

St Blazey Gate, St Blazey, Par, Cornwall, PL24 2DS

Inspection dates 17–18 September 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Parents comment that they cannot speak highly enough of the support that the school provides for their children. It is true to its vision of aspiration, confidence and independence.
- All pupils, those who are disabled, have special educational needs, complex medical and autistic spectrum conditions and those for whom the pupil premium provides support, make good progress from a wide range of starting points.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan creatively. The team work in each class between all adults means that learning is very effective throughout the school day.
- The staff establish creative solutions to enable all pupils to participate fully in school activities including the school choir and school council. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of all they do.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and enjoy learning so that this contributes to excellent behaviour in almost all lessons. They have good opportunities to develop their social skills and support each other with learning.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have demonstrated that they have capacity for further improvement by carrying out all the recommendations for improvement from the previous inspection. As a result, pupils' progress has improved.
- Pupils have good opportunities for performance and to be involved in activities in the wider community.
- The sixth form is good, providing opportunities for pupils to develop their basic reading, writing, mathematics, personal, social and life skills and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to accelerate progress in every lesson because staff do not always have sufficiently clear high expectations of each pupil's individual learning.
- Leaders and managers have not yet made sure that the curriculum for older pupils provides sufficient opportunities for work-based learning and the development of their skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 15 lessons taught by 12 teachers, of which nine were joint observations with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other members, committee chairs and parent governors, and an adviser from the local authority. Informal conversations with pupils and parents took place and a telephone call to a parent.
- Inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read and observed others using books.
- The inspection team scrutinised school documentation, including information relating to assessment and pupils' progress, planning for school improvement and records about behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. They took account of 39 questionnaires received from staff.
- There were 11 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. The team considered a survey of parents' views recently undertaken by the school.

Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore

Lead inspector

Andrew Penman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a special school. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. They have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. A third of pupils have autistic spectrum conditions and many have additional and complex needs associated with physical disabilities and medical conditions.
- There is a much higher-than-average proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, among others. All these groups are in receipt of the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils arriving and leaving at times that would not normally be expected is high.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. Whilst Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegation were considered (where appropriate), alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.
- There are two residential hostels on the school site run by social care and subject to separate inspections. 'Doubletrees Hostel' provides short break care; 'Pathways' provides longer term care for children in crisis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that a greater proportion is outstanding by making sure that there are clear, high expectations for individual pupils' learning in every lesson to accelerate their progress further.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that the curriculum for older pupils is clearly focused on giving pupils the skills they will need when they leave school and providing more opportunities for work-based learning activities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with communication by learning to recognise signs and symbols that make sure they understand the structure of the school day. They can also make requests using pictures. Disabled pupils and those with autistic spectrum conditions use a good range of technological aids that enable them to express themselves and communicate very effectively.
- Disabled pupils use their developing communication skills well in response to sensory and physical stimulus. Disabled children in the Early Years Foundation Stage respond well to songs, bubbles and massage, demonstrating participation, enjoyment and excellent progress.
- Pupils with developing speech use word and signs effectively to demonstrate that they understand questions and make comments about substances they are handling, for example ice or jelly. Pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5 respond to questions well and can explain what they are writing about, the books they are reading and the purpose of their role in the school council.
- Pupils enjoy books, whether it is to recognise pictures, count objects or to read at length. They demonstrate knowledge of letters and the sounds they make and this enables them to spell and write simple sentences.
- Children in Key Stage 2 use their developing skills well to make choices about their snack and begin to count. Pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5 make good progress in mathematics, demonstrating life skills in calculation and budgeting to purchase food.
- Pupils new to the school settle quickly and respond well to the care and nurture they receive, so that they make good gains in their learning and excellent improvements in their social skills and behaviour. There are examples of outstanding progress for some individual pupils, previously excluded from other special provision, making particularly rapid gains in communication and reading.
- All groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, make good progress. There is no difference in progress between different groups as each individual works towards targets that are ensuring continued good progress. There is also no difference in the attainment of pupils in English and mathematics for those eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not.
- All groups of pupils, whatever their disability or special educational needs, make good progress with their physical development. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to extend their skills in individualised activities, a wide range of therapies and physical education including swimming and football.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The class teaching teams are well led by teachers who have expert professional knowledge of how different groups of pupils learn. They plan and manage activities with the teaching assistants so that communication skills in particular are well taught.
- Activities such as separating a mixture of rice and flour and making Cornish pasties are well designed to teach pupils a wide range of sensory, physical, social, mathematical and communication skills. Teachers plan activities that engage pupils well, maintaining a good pace in lessons and ensuring that they make good progress in these areas from all their different starting points.
- Reading is taught well and teachers have a good knowledge of how to adapt teaching of early developing skills, exploring sound and pictures before moving on to letters and word recognition.
- In outstanding lessons the teacher's commentary about what the pupils are learning is an excellent example of feedback to pupils and staff and maintains a good pace of learning. Pupils respond well to the increasing challenges to develop their skills and know that teachers help

them to improve.

- Teachers' excellent knowledge of pupils and the very small steps in learning mean that the checking of pupils' progress is accurate in all subjects. Class teams talk about their observations of learning regularly and this informs the planning for the next steps so that good progress is maintained. Any slowing of progress is quickly identified and activities and programmes adjusted to meet individual needs.
- Teaching is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage because learning is planned creatively, providing maximum opportunities for children to make as much progress as they can and all staff and therapists work together very well.
- Teaching is good in the sixth form. Teachers are very skilled in adapting learning to those with the most profound learning difficulties and provide well-structured opportunities to teach reading and mathematics skills.
- Teaching is not outstanding because in a few lessons there are not clear or high enough expectations of what each individual pupil will learn and practise so that the progress they make is not as rapid as it could be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' enthusiasm contributes very strongly to excellent behaviour in almost all lessons. Disabled pupils demonstrate this well by smiling and reaching for bubbles and scarves. Pupils respond quickly to instruction and participate well, the oldest pupils showing resilience and application to the task. All pupils maintain their attention well.
- New pupils comment about how friendly the school is and how everyone helps you. There are no recorded incidents of bullying and sensitive relationships at all levels mean that everyone is aware of how to prevent it.
- Attendance is above average and pupils say that they enjoy school. They feel safe and are confident that adults keep them safe and there is always someone they can talk to.
- Adults are very sensitive to those pupils with communication difficulties, quickly responding to their needs. Adults provide excellent support to those whose conditions mean that they find it very difficult to control their responses and behaviour. Situations are constantly adjusted to increase independence, minimise anxiety and prevent the likelihood of poor behaviour.
- Behaviour support planning for individual pupils is thorough, so that all staff, including those in the neighbouring hostel and 'Pathways', are fully aware of potential triggers and the best responses for each pupil. This comprehensive analysis is shared with parents so they are well supported in the management of their children's behaviour at home.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed. Pupils participate in many activities and events in the local community, taking part in public performance. They show empathy and support for each other, rejoicing in each other's successes.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because in a very few lessons pupils are sometimes waiting for their turn because the learning activities and support are not well designed enough for them to be fully involved all of the time.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school and the progress that all the different groups of pupils are making. They use this well to make sure that improvement planning is well focused. Specific work with groups of pupils whose progress is identified as slowing has resulted in changes that have led to improvements for all pupils.
- Leaders check teaching regularly and accurately through a structured programme of classroom observations and checking pupils' work. They provide good support for teachers to improve their professional expertise and classroom practice so that teaching is good and the proportion of outstanding practice is increasing.

- There are excellent partnerships with a range of health professionals, including a full-time school nurse and child psychiatrist who hold regular clinics at the school. The school is a leader of best practice in managing meetings with a range of other professionals and agencies, supporting parents and pupils well in this process.
- Parents speak highly of the school, saying that it always plays to their children's strengths, commenting on how their children make good progress through the dedication and skills of the whole staff who know their children extremely well. There is excellent daily communication with families and carers through home-school books, email and telephone calls.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage makes sure that specific and diverse needs are well met. Teaching is organised to make the most progress in all areas of learning and development and communication, and support for parents is very effective.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met and school procedures have been reviewed and revised to make sure that passing of information is effective and timely.
- Leadership and management in the sixth form do not make the most of opportunities to prepare pupils for their next stage of education, training or employment, particularly for work-based skills because of the organisation of the class groups and the arrangements for the curriculum.
- The local authority highly values the school's contribution to the support of disabled pupils and those with significant special educational needs in mainstream schools and resource bases across the authority. The local authority provides minimal support for the school and has confidence in the leaders to continue to improve the school.
- The school's partnerships and involvement in the local community contribute strongly to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination which are also paramount within the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well trained and have a good range of skills from, for example, the legal profession and construction industry, to very effectively challenge and support the school. The leadership of the Chair and the restructuring of the committees have enabled the governing body to be active in supporting the headteacher and senior leaders in strategic aspects of leadership. They make sure that the headteacher's performance is well managed and that teachers are rewarded appropriately through salary progression for their performance in the classroom. They understand pupils' progress data related to the specific and specialised needs of pupils at the school and how these compare to other schools nationally. They make sure that pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up premium is used very effectively.

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	112085
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	426709

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	95
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicky McIntosh
Headteacher	Kim Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 November 2011
Telephone number	01726 812757
Fax number	01726 812896
Email address	enquiries@doubletrees.cornwall.sch.uk

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