

Fiveways Special School

Victoria Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 5AZ

Inspection dates 8-9 July 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher, governing body and school leaders have extremely high ambitions for the children in their care. They have a strategic vision for the school and work closely together in their relentless drive to offer the highest quality of education.
- As a result of leaders' high expectations, pupils across the school, often from very low starting points, make exceptionally good progress.
- Senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants constantly check the pupils' progress; small steps in learning are shared with parents and carers each day.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have a detailed understanding of the often complex needs of every child. They plan imaginative lessons that encourage all pupils to become actively involved.
- Speech, language and communication development is given a high priority throughout the school and is included in all activities. Consequently, pupils make extremely good progress in this area.
- The sixth form is outstanding. It provides a nurturing environment that encourages young people to become more independent and effectively prepares many of them for college.
- Pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is outstanding and pupils say they feel safe. Staff and pupils treat each other with the utmost respect and are extremely proud of their school community.
- The school offers a wide range of learning opportunities and as a result, pupils love coming to school. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and are very keen to share their experiences.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. From very low starting points children make outstanding progress over time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed eight parts of lessons including five with senior leaders. Inspectors watched an assembly and made short visits to the mechanical horse, used by children who are unable to ride real horses, and the concert to observe learning.
- There were 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Questionnaires from 37 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, safeguarding and pupils' assessment information, as well as examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with representatives from the governing body, the local authority, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Fiveways Special School is a small school. The majority of pupils are of White British Heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is just above average.
- All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- No pupils attend an off-site provision.
- Some pupils are also registered with local mainstream schools.
- The school is expanding in September 2014 to accommodate an additional 10 pupils with complex difficulties.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils, including those new to the school, achieve maximum personal independence by reviewing the resources available for those with complex physical difficulties so that they can take part in all the learning opportunities that are on offer.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils arrive at the school with very complex learning needs. By the time they leave the school, the majority have made outstanding progress, particularly in their speech, language and communication skills.
- Pupils are encouraged, where possible, to become more independent as they move towards the next stage of their education. In the sixth form, as they prepare to leave the school, all pupils, and their parents or carers, are given very effective support and guidance, with many going on to local colleges.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are taught reading and writing using phonics (letters and the sounds they make). While no pupils pass the national phonics check, this is due to the inability of many children to make a verbal response.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, children learn well through a mixture of play and focused teaching, matched to their needs.
- In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils are taught a range of skills, including mathematics, reading, writing, information and communication technology (ICT) and science. They are encouraged to communicate verbally or by using sign language. Demonstrating that they can think for themselves and be independent is celebrated.
- In the sixth form, there are three national awards that pupils can work towards, depending on their starting points. All pupils leave school with at least one and these prepare them for the next stage in their education, particularly for those going on to college.
- Every child has a statement of special educational needs. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed based on teachers' assessments of pupils' progress.
- The thorough process for collecting information on pupils' progress is used consistently across all areas of the school. All teachers and teaching assistants are responsible for collecting this information. During each session, they make notes or take photographs of pupils working and this helps the class teacher to decide where and when progress has been made. This information is regularly shared with senior leaders who meticulously analyse the performance of individual pupils and groups.
- Each day, through the home-school book, parents and carers are informed of small steps in learning for their children and are encouraged to comment on any progress at home. This has helped the school to build excellent working relationships with them and better meet the daily needs of each child.
- The school is involved in productive partnerships with other schools in the authority. They share children's work to ensure that the assessments are accurate.
- All pupils who are eligible for additional funding make excellent progress over time. As with all pupils at the school, any temporary lapse in learning is investigated thoroughly and action is taken quickly. The funding has been targeted to provide extra one-to-one support in language and communication skills and ICT. Senior leaders scrutinise the effectiveness of these activities on pupils' learning and have improvement plans in place for the following year.
- A speech and language therapist and a SLT assistant, work individually with pupils, and also support teachers to plan appropriate classroom activities. Progress for many pupils is excellent.
- The two literacy coordinators are fully committed to improving literacy across the school and regularly check that teachers are effectively teaching reading and writing skills. While the library is being redesigned, the books have been moved out to classrooms. This has encouraged pupils to make choices about the books they read. The pupils who read to the inspectors said that they thoroughly enjoyed reading books and being involved in storytelling.
- All of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View were exceptionally pleased with the progress made by their children.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is excellent. They know the pupils exceptionally well and are able to adapt activities quickly to make sure that they are meeting the pupils' often complex needs. They keep accurate records of small steps in learning and these inform their planning.
- Learning is encouraged through extremely well planned, imaginative activities that involve all pupils. Resources are creative and practical, often giving pupils experiences where their senses are stimulated, particularly for those with the most complex needs. Pupils are encouraged to get involved, express themselves and have fun. Teachers and teaching assistants consistently ask pupils to think and give them time to respond, rather than giving them the answers.
- In a storytelling lesson, pupils experienced first-hand 'life on the high seas', from the terrible storm, the sinking ship and the approach of a shark. This was achieved entirely through role-play using music and objects. Pupils were encouraged to think about their emotions in each part of the story, particularly when the shark was approaching, and share the experience with others in the class. This session was enjoyed by all.
- The whole-school approach to improving pupils' speech and language skills is used in separate communication lessons and throughout the whole school day. A mixture of rhymes, songs, discussions and questioning ensures that pupils keep practising their language and communication skills, irrespective of their starting points. Pupils are encouraged to communicate using sign language, facial expressions, spoken words and pointing to pictures provided by the teachers and teaching assistants.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to support their child's learning at home. Senior leaders and teachers give guidance and resources to those who wish to do this. Sixth form pupils in particular, work on 'home programmes' as they gather evidence for their national qualifications.
- Of those who responded to Parent View, all believe that their child is taught extremely well at school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils could tell the inspectors how they kept themselves safe in a range of situations and what they would do if for instance, they got lost. Senior leaders, the governing body and staff work very hard to ensure that everyone adheres to the robust systems that are in place to prioritise everyone's safety.
- The behaviour of pupils across the school, including in the sixth form, is outstanding. Throughout the school day, pupils' behaviour towards each other and the staff is both courteous and polite. They are taught to listen carefully to each other, respect each other's needs and at times be patient and wait. Parents and carers shared with inspectors the marked improvements in their own child's behaviour at home since they had started at the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school, are keen to be involved in the activities and are eager to share their experiences. Those with the most limited communication skills are able to show their delight and excitement in their facial expressions while participating in class activities. One pupil describes his school day as 'the happy bus'.
- School leaders, teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of how they want pupils to behave. Staff use a mixture of simple verbal reminders, pictures and sign language effectively when pupils lose concentration. This approach is consistently applied across the school. As a result, very few incidences of poor behaviour occur in any area of the school. Any that do arise are meticulously recorded and time is given to exploring the reasons why and how this might be avoided in the future.
- The school works very hard and is successful in creating equal opportunities for the pupils and

tackling discrimination through its extensive inclusion programme. Some pupils are able to attend other local schools for part of the week and there are a large number of opportunities for schools to visit and participate in joint activities. For instance, during the inspection, a local secondary school performed a concert for the pupils.

- Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils do sometimes need time away from school, for example, to attend hospital appointments.
- Pupils adore the 'Star' programme that celebrates small achievements and builds to 'Star of the Week' recognition. This is one of their favourite aspects of school life.
- Bullying is very rare at the school. At times, pupils have disagreements and they need support from the staff in order to understand each other's viewpoints. On very rare occasions school leaders have felt it necessary to make slight changes to groups or the learning environment to ensure that the social and emotional needs of a particular child have been met.
- Of those that responded to Parent View the majority feel that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved and that the school deals effectively with bullying.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have exceptionally high ambitions for the young people in their care. They are an extremely experienced and unified group and base all their decision making on a thorough understanding of the individual needs of the pupils, the expertise of the staff and the facilities the school offers. Their self-evaluation is accurate and based on a suitably wide range of evidence.
- Senior leaders have fostered very positive working relationships with a number of local schools and some further afield. Working in partnership with these schools has proved to be a very valuable experience and has enabled them to share ideas and resources and to be part of some innovative teaching developments.
- As a designated teaching school, senior leaders coordinate and often deliver packages of support to other schools in the local authority and beyond. The headteacher is working with other special school headteachers nationally and government advisors, to develop a better understanding of pupils with more complex needs.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have worked tirelessly to raise funds in order to offer specialist equipment for the young people. These include the hydrotherapy pool and Thunder, the full size mechanical horse for those children who would not be able to ride real horses.
- Senior leaders have in place an extremely robust system for gathering information on the progress of individual pupils and of groups of pupils. They use a range of assessment tools, including one that they are developing locally, to record small steps in learning. As a result, they have been able to undertake regular analysis of this information, which is used in discussions with teachers, parents and carers and reported back to the governing body.
- All middle leaders are extremely clear about their role, are fully supported by senior leaders and as a result, are highly effective. The culture of the school ensures staff share their ideas and learn from each other. Middle leaders help cultivate this ethos.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. The sixth form is housed in a purpose-built block. Pupils are encouraged to mix across the school, especially at break times and through their internal work experience which helps to build their independent skills. The sixth form lead has built strong links with local schools and colleges in order to support parents, carers and pupils as they move on.
- Leaders at all levels check the performance of staff in the classroom and provide them with any necessary advice or further training. As a result, teaching throughout the school is outstanding and pupils make outstanding progress.
- Leaders at all levels strive to build very productive working relationships with parents and carers through the home-school book, telephone and email conversations and the many events run at the school. Of those who replied to Parent View, all felt that they received valuable information

from the school.

- The school's curriculum is wide and varied. While the school places an emphasis on speech, language and communication, mathematics, science, ICT, the arts and physical education are also given high priority.
- The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Through trips, visits, events, excursions to the forest school and in the classroom, pupils are encouraged to think about themselves, others and the world around them.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are in places exemplary.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Classrooms and outdoor spaces encourage young children to explore. Highly trained staff, managed by the highly effective lead, ensure that pupils make outstanding progress at this early stage of their education.
- The primary school sports funding has been used to employ a specialist sports coach, a specialist swimming coach and support from a lead practitioner. This is already having a positive impact on individual children and on teachers' planning of activities such as 'wake and shake'. It has also been used to enhance break time resources, such as a wheelchair roundabout, to ensure that all pupils can take part in physical activities.
- The inclusion manager rigorously monitors the learning provision for those pupils who attend other schools during the week and checks individual pupil files. Regular visits to off-site classes are organised to ensure that pupils' learning is being extended.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works very closely with senior leaders at the school to ensure that they offer the highest standards of education to the young people in their care. Governors challenge senior leaders about the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. As a result, they have an exceptionally deep understanding of where teaching is strong and of the areas for development. They regularly discuss the progress of individuals and groups, including the more able and those receiving additional funding, with senior leaders. They set high standards for the headteacher through the performance management process. They are very involved in the daily life of the school and effectively manage all financial resources, including extra funding from pupil premium and primary sports.
 - They have driven changes to the structure of the building as a direct result of the changing needs of new pupils at the school and have in place two further projects as the school expands. They have encouraged school leaders to build positive relationships with other schools and have developed the teaching school. Safeguarding requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 123944 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 427164 |

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

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| Type of school | All-through |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 4–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 66 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 17 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Malcolm Gulliver |
| Headteacher | Mark Collis |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8–9 October 2008 |
| Telephone number | 01935 476227 |
| Fax number | |
| Email address | mcollis@educ.somerset.gov.uk |

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