

# Villa Real School

Villa Real Road, Consett, DH8 6BH

**Inspection dates** 24–25 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Villa Real is a good school. The new headteacher and her inspiring leadership, senior leaders and governors have improved many aspects of the school's performance since the last inspection.
- From very low starting points, all groups of pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, make good progress. They often make outstanding progress in their communication skills.
- The most-able pupils become confident in working in the community on enterprise activities, leading to the good development of their communication and social skills.
- Teaching is good and has continued to improve since the last inspection. This is due to the school's clear commitment towards specialist teaching, individualised therapy programmes and the high expectations the staff have for each individual pupil.
- The curriculum is good and has many opportunities to develop language and communication skills.
- The sixth form is good and students make good progress because the subjects they follow prepare them well for life after school and potential employment.
- Progress in the Early Years is good, due to the positive relationships which encourage children to communicate what they need and the strong focus on improving their physical mobility.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and this is seen in their attitudes in lessons and whilst participating in activities around the school. Relationships with staff are excellent, due to the caring, encouraging environment.
- Safety is good and pupils say they feel safe and happy in a friendly school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy their daily assemblies and the many visits outside of school where they can socialise and experience new things.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Few opportunities exist in other subjects for pupils to develop and apply mathematics skills to improve their progress.
- Assessment in early years is not frequent or regular enough to show the small steps of progress to move learning forward.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons taught by 10 teachers. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons with the headteacher to check the quality of assessment and learning for pupils.
- An inspector also met seven pupils to talk about their work and experience of the school.
- The inspectors had discussions with the teachers, senior leaders, pupils, parents and the governing body.
- The inspection looked at the work of the school, including pupils' behaviour, and analysed documentation in relation to attendance, safeguarding, pupils' work, self-evaluation and the school's system for checking on pupils' progress.
- The inspectors looked at the responses from parents. They reviewed the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's recent parental survey. An inspector met with one parent during the school day.

### Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela James

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Villa Real is an average-sized special school in county Durham. It provides for pupils aged 3 to 19 years.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides for severe, profound, medical and complex learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder or cerebral palsy.
- The vast majority of pupils are boys of White British origin.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- More than half of the pupils are supported by pupil premium. This is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- In September 2013, the school appointed a new headteacher, following the retirement of the previous headteacher. The vacancy for assistant headteacher was also filled and the school's business manager was added to complete the senior leadership team.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve assessment in early years by ensuring that children's work is assessed with even greater consistency to plan for next steps for learning.
- Further improve pupils' skills and achievement in mathematics by providing more opportunities to develop and apply them in other subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management is good.

- The new senior leadership team, together with the governing body, are ambitious and in a short period of time have developed a positive culture where all staff strive to be the best they can be, to give pupils the best academic and personal education they can. As a result, the school has improved in all aspects of its work. There is a shared view for continual improvement and excellence.
- The school has good systems for checking the performance of teachers and has used this effectively to develop the skills of staff by providing effective, bespoke training. This has had a significant impact on the delivery of specialist programmes to support pupils' physical and communication development.
- The school has sound processes in place for self-evaluation. Priorities for further improvement are, therefore, clearly defined and resulting school actions have ensured that all aspects of the school's work continually get better. Governors play a key role in these processes and check regularly through their monitoring how effectively the priorities are being implemented.
- Senior and middle leaders are explicit in their belief that every child should make as much academic progress as possible. This is reflected in the rigorous analysis of individual pupil data and checking of personal plans for progress at regular progress meetings.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium funding wisely. For instance, it is used for additional 1:1 support and the purchase of specialist software to support reading. As a result, tracking of individual pupils shows they are now on track to make good or better progress in reading and are not falling behind their classmates.
- The curriculum is strongly focused on developing pupils' communication skills so they make good and often outstanding progress in speaking, reading and writing. However, in some subjects there are not enough opportunities to develop their skills in mathematics to further increase their progress.
- Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have a relevant, exciting and highly engaging curriculum that promotes understanding of British values and other cultures well. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development and their health education is supported extremely well so that pupils have a very good understanding of their own and others' needs.
- Pupils, parents and staff feel they are highly valued by the school community. The school's ethos is inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity very well and tackles discrimination promptly. As one parent indicated, 'I really could not fault the care and attention my child gets. The activities she does and has been offered are amazing. I am always made to feel welcome.'
- Safeguarding meets requirements with much effective practice strengthening the good care and support for pupils and their families.
- The primary school sport funding is being used well. The school has employed external coaches and trained teachers to improve their sports teaching skills and to offer pupils more sporting activities. Additionally, extra swimming lessons have been made available for primary age pupils. These opportunities have increased pupils' participation and are improving their physical well-being.
- The local authority has provided effective support from an external consultant to the new headteacher's evaluation of the school's performance and priorities for the school development plan.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

The governing body is totally committed to the school and its pupils. It makes a good contribution to leadership through both support and challenge. Governors make highly effective use of performance management to improve outcomes for pupils continuously. They have a good variety of expertise and have accessed suitable training to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively. All safeguarding aspects meet current requirements. They check the quality of teaching and understand the essential links between the quality of learning and attendance for all groups of pupils. They have addressed weaknesses in the monitoring of finance to ensure greater challenge to school leaders and they use the pupil premium with other funding to deliver individualised and specialist programmes.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils is good.

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils are confident and show good attitudes to their learning and take pride in their work. They want to do well.
- Staff are highly skilled in maintaining a positive atmosphere at all times. This is because they use skilled techniques to ensure that pupils are calm and stress free. Comments from parents, staff and pupils are positive about the good standard of behaviour they see in school.

- The school has worked extremely diligently to improve attendance, which is now above that of similar schools. This has included highly effective work with specialist support agencies and families and in particular, for those pupils with long-term absence because of their medical needs.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know that if they have any concerns they can approach an adult who will help them sort out any difficulties that they may be experiencing. Through assemblies and the curriculum they learn how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school, such as safety in the kitchen or when crossing roads.
- Conversations with pupils reveal that they have a very secure grasp of what constitutes bullying. They report that there are very few incidents of bullying and harassment. Pupils speak confidently about how staff are always on hand to help them if they have a worry or concern.

### **The quality of teaching** is good.

- Work seen in last year's books and achievement files as well as checks done by senior leaders, and evidence collected during the inspection demonstrate good quality teaching over time.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour and work and there is a shared respect between the pupils and their teachers. As a result, pupils are proud of their work and eager to show it to other adults in the classroom.
- Literacy and numeracy tasks are planned well and effectively assessed verbally during lessons to develop understanding. This leads to good engagement from the pupils to sign or say what they understand and staff are clear about how individual pupils are learning.
- Questioning is used very well to check understanding as an activity proceeds systematically. Teachers adjust their plans based on their assessment to ensure that each pupil is achieving their best. For example, during a mathematics activity, more-able pupils solved increasingly complex number problems as a result of the excellent knowledge of the teacher.
- All staff are highly skilled at meeting the communication and physical needs of all pupils. The well-trained staff use highly effective strategies to enable pupils to access their learning. This was demonstrated during a particularly successful activity where pupils, while carrying out movements on their feet, sang a song and counted the number of times for the exercise.
- Pupils not on track to meet their targets receive effective interventions for literacy, communication and therapy, all personalised to their individual needs. For example, two language communication support assistants provide specialist support to individual pupils across the school directed by the speech and language therapy team. For some pupils, this has resulted in them increasing their use of signing in the classroom.
- Communication with parents on the work and the learning for their children is good. Parents are eager to feed back to school on their child's learning and well-being and one parent commented on a resource to promote effective communication by touch, 'Communication is good between home and school'.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good.

- Pupils make good progress during their time in school. This is because learning is planned well, support is targeted well, and pupils are keen to learn. Pupils like their teachers and want to succeed for them.
- As a result of their special educational needs and disabilities, all pupils are working well below national expectations when they start school. The majority of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, when compared to the progress of pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Pupils with speech and language difficulties make good progress as a result of the very effective integrated therapy that maximises their access to learning. Pupils with physical disabilities also make good progress, because of the regular therapy that builds on very small steps of progress and motivates them to achieve.
- Pupils' books show that they have good opportunities to read and write in school, but in some subjects there is not enough focus on numeracy to develop and practise skills to make even greater progress.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because they have many opportunities to develop their social and communication skills to understand the world around them. Pupils are confident to apply these skills extensively in other subjects and use them to communicate with others.
- As a result of well-targeted support, all groups of pupils, disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and children who are looked after by the local authority, make similar good progress to that of their peers. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.

**The early years provision is good.**

- Children make good progress in early years from significantly low starting points due to their communication and language, social and physical needs, including those for whom the school receives additional funding and the most able. They have highly tailored personalised programmes to improve their motor and cognitive skills, which provide a good foundation for the next stage in their education.
- The quality of teaching over time is good. Children's learning journals from the previous year show that they are taught well and engage in a wide variety of interesting activities covering all areas of learning. Teachers have assessed children's skills frequently in the past and adapted their planning to meet their needs and interests. Recently, though a good range of assessment is in use, it has been less consistent in planning next steps for children. Adults are competently trained in teaching early reading skills.
- Indoor classrooms provide children with an exciting learning environment. Resources are easily accessible to the children and are chosen well to stimulate interest. They contribute well to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as in encouraging imagination in the role play areas. In the outdoor areas, children can develop their creative skills well through, for example, painting the side of the shed.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has trained the new teachers and other adults well. There are effective strategies in place for accurate systems for assessing children's language and communication and progress and the information is used well to plan the next steps of learning. Dialogue between staff and children has improved so that children are challenged and helped to learn at a better pace.

**The sixth form provision is good.**

- Students' work and their records of achievement show that teaching is consistently good over time. Each individual students' skills and aptitudes in speech and language, reading, writing and mathematics are developed carefully as they progress through the school. This means that by the end of the sixth form, the majority have achieved national independence awards.
- The school provides good opportunities for careers education on future college courses. The school prepares students well through working on independence skills, such as independent travel, throughout the sixth form and takes them on visits to prepare them for the future change to their education and work.
- The curriculum is good. It provides good opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy as well as relevant, interesting and engaging subjects, such as horticulture, enterprise, animal care, photography and printing. Students are well-prepared through planned experiences to practise what will keep them safe and well. One student showed the inspector his photographs of cleaning a wound and applying a plaster.
- Through tracking the performance of current students in Key Stage 4, the senior leader of the sixth form has planned well new accreditation for some more-able students to ensure that they have challenge when they enter the sixth form.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114345
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	448057

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	82
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	17
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Suzanne Bailey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Common
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 503651
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