

Glenwood School

Rushbottom Lane, New Thundersley, Benfleet, SS7 4LW

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Excellent leadership and management, with very effective support from governors, have ensured that teaching is outstanding and meets pupils' needs highly effectively. As a result pupils make outstanding progress from the early years to the sixth form.
- The headteacher has built a highly competent team of other leaders around her, but also has a very clear overview of all initiatives. She ensures that everyone is highly focused on whole school improvement and all developments contribute to this.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for learning and pupils rise to these. All staff are extremely passionate about ensuring that every child is given every opportunity to succeed.
- The school code 'Together we respect, achieve and make good choices' has real meaning to everyone in the school community. This is evident in the very positive relationships between staff and pupils and the excellent behaviour and positive attitudes for learning seen throughout the school.
- Teachers make excellent use of signing, visual timetables, symbols and extremely well chosen resources to ensure that pupils with different learning needs are absorbed in their activities and can understand.
- All pupils make outstanding progress in their communication and in their personal development. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties and those with autistic spectrum disorders do exceptionally well, so that they are much more social and communicative with others.
- All pupils are valued as individuals and the school does much to raise their self esteem and confidence. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school.
- In the early years outstanding teaching supported by excellent planning enables children to make very rapid progress and settle into their routines extremely smoothly.
- Highly effective leadership in the sixth form has led to outstanding provision. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their lives beyond school.
- A common theme amongst the many positive comments received from parents is summed up as: 'Glenwood School provides a wonderful, safe, welcoming environment for all the children that attend it'. A few parents and carers wish they had more information about their child's next steps in learning so they can help to develop and apply these new skills more at home.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all teachers and visited 18 lessons. This enabled inspectors to see how teaching staff provided for pupils with different types of learning difficulties found within the school. All of the classes visited were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard a small number of pupils read. They also had a meeting with four members of the school council to talk about their work and their experience of the school. Informal discussions took place with pupils during visits to the classroom and at lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, members of the Integrated Therapy team, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school self-evaluation summary, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, annual review reports, safeguarding policies, records of behaviour, attendance figures, information about children's progress in the Early Years, pupils' progress over time and the progress and destinations of pupils on leaving the sixth form.
- Inspectors considered 34 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents) including the 29 comments made on these and a letter sent in by a parent. Inspectors also took into account 47 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Lynda Walker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sandra Teacher

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Glenwood is a mixed day special school. It caters for 120 pupils all who have been identified as having severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Approximately 50% of the pupils have autistic spectrum disorder and this proportion is increasing steadily. A few pupils have degenerative conditions. Pupils' needs are often complex including many that have communication difficulties, physical or medical needs.
- All pupils have a statement of their special educational needs, except for a few of the youngest children who are currently going through the process of having an Education and Health Care Plan drawn up.
- Approximately 22% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (a government grant for disadvantaged children). This is in line with the national average.
- The sixth form students benefit from a range of learning opportunities in the wider community including working with John Laing Training Limited, a construction company where they participate in a number of work-related activities.
- Most pupils are White British. There are twice as many boys as girls which is typical for schools of this type.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the next steps in pupils' learning are shared more frequently with parents and carers.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership at all levels is outstanding because leaders are so focused on improving the already very high quality teaching and learning, and on driving other improvements forward. The exceptional headteacher has built a very strong team around her. Together they have established an ethos in the school which enables all pupils to do extremely well, and to flourish.
- Robust and highly effective arrangements for managing the performance of teachers are clearly linked to the national 'Teaching Standards' and pupil progress. Rigorous and regular monitoring of teaching through lesson observations, 'excellence team' meetings to discuss pupil progress and scrutiny of pupils' work ensure that teaching is outstanding. If any pupil starts to fall behind this is identified and responded to swiftly.
- Staff are extremely well trained. They have highly specialist skills in working with pupils with severe or profound and multiple difficulties and all of the other learning needs found within the school. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully track the progress of individual pupils and of different groups. The well-being and achievement of the pupils is at the heart of the school's work and every child has an opportunity to succeed. There is no discrimination.
- Children in the early years and throughout the school follow a rich and stimulating, broad and balanced and highly relevant curriculum based on the six areas of learning. Activities are adapted extremely well to the next steps in pupils' learning and to meet the needs of every learner.
- The school works extremely well with other specialists such as the Integrated Therapy team and a range of health and social care professionals to ensure that everyone is working together to optimise each child's development, learning and comfort. This has a very positive impact on pupil achievement.
- Pupils in the sixth form follow a wide range of subjects which build very well on their previous learning. This includes appropriate careers education. Leaders are highly focused on ensuring each of them develops their independence skills and ability to make choices. This means they leave very well prepared for life after school.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development. Pupils learn about British values through a vibrant pupil voice an elected school council and being actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. This is a school that celebrates the worth and individuality of every member of the school community.
- The school works extremely well in partnership with parents and carers. As well as involving them in their children's learning, the school does a great deal to support the whole family particularly when pupils are joining or leaving the school. However, although parents know what their children's yearly targets are they do not always know what the next small steps toward this are. A few feel this means they cannot help their child at home as much as they would like.
- Leaders make excellent use of pupil premium funding to provide additional individual or small group support and additional speech and language therapy support for those pupils eligible. These support pupils' development particularly in communication and personal and social health education. As a result these pupils make the same consistently outstanding progress as their classmates.
- The primary physical education and sport premium has also been used very effectively by the school to improve the quality and breadth of physical education and sporting provision so that all learners develop healthy lifestyles and reach the performance levels in a range of sports and games.
- Pupils' safety and welfare are a major priority at the school. Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met and that high quality risk assessments are in place. Staff are very vigilant and are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns.

- School staff always accompany pupils in any off-site learning and keep detailed records relating to their attendance, behaviour and progress. Excellent working relationships between school and external providers support pupils' personal development and confidence, and mean that they gain hugely from these placements.
- The local authority provides appropriate support to this outstanding school and the school benefits from using local authority services.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a wealth of professional expertise to their role; they have an excellent oversight of the school's work and support it very effectively.
 - Governors have an accurate view of teaching and learning based on a good understanding of the school's data and their regular visits to the school. They oversee the management of the headteacher's performance well and know about other staff's performance and how the appraisal arrangements support this. They ensure the school rewards strong teaching and are clear about the systems for tackling any underperformance should this arise.
 - Governors have a very clear understanding of how the school promotes tolerance and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. They ensure that the school applies all the required safeguarding measures and health and safety procedures rigorously. They are meticulous about checking risk assessments to ensure the safety of pupils both on and off site.
 - The governing body ensures that the school is financially stable and hold leaders to account for its spending on primary physical education and sport and pupil premium funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate an increasingly high level of independence and confidence as they move through the school. Comprehensive behaviour plans which are part of individual Personal and Social Support Strategies, ensure pupils are given the right support to enable them to attempt tasks independently if they are able to. Rare incidents of challenging behaviour are very well managed and so do not disrupt the learning of other pupils. Individual pupil records show that because of the support put in place there is an excellent improvement in pupils' behaviour over time if they have arrived with particular difficulties in this area.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. This is reflected in their eagerness to take part in all school activities, including their lessons. Not a moment for learning is lost. All pupils are able to participate fully as therapy provision is integrated into daily lessons as much as possible. For example, pupils are positioned carefully, if necessary using specially adapted chairs and raised tables.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now broadly in line with that expected nationally. When pupils are absent it is usually linked to serious medical conditions and need for ongoing treatment. The school works very closely with parents and the local paediatrician who holds her clinics in school to make sure pupils miss as little time away from school as possible.
- The school provides a very well kept and stimulating environment for learning. This is adapted well to motivate individual pupils, so that they show great excitement and involvement in their learning. Pupils are very polite and extremely proud of their own and friends' achievements. They were very keen to show the inspectors their good work.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school provides exemplary care for all its pupils, many of them whom need sensitive personal support. Staff are rigorous in pursuing safety routines. When moving or handling pupils their dignity is always respected.
- Rigorous procedures check the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children and ensure that staff

have all the required welfare, health and safety training, including having large numbers who have first aid training. This means that pupils are safe and feel safe to learn.

- High levels of supervision and engagement of adults in children's learning in the early years ensures that they quickly settle. Those children who might find new experiences threatening are increasingly prepared to have a go because of the very strong trusting relationships they develop with their teachers and assistants.
- Pupils move safely around the school. They are extremely well supported to handle equipment and use cooking utensils and computer equipment safely.
- Sixth form pupils have a good sense of personal safety. Staff keep a careful check on their safety when they are off-site at their work related activities and when they are out in the community. They move with confidence from area to area in the school but with a keen awareness of what they must do to keep themselves safe, for example when handling tools. They understand why they have to wear a hard hat and boots on a building site.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with adults and show kindness and respect to each other. They are courteous and polite to adults and confident to go to any member of staff if they feel worried about anything. Bullying or harassment of any kind does not occur. The more able pupils could explain to inspectors what bullying meant and how they could keep themselves safe by not touching wires on the computer.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching over time, across subjects and in all key stages, including the early years and the sixth form is outstanding. It is never less than good. This is supported by the learning seen in lessons, the school's own checks, information about pupil's progress and evidence available to inspectors in pupils' work and records.
- Teachers have high expectations. They have a thorough knowledge of each pupil's learning needs and what each pupil's achievements are to date. They use this very effectively to support pupils' learning. Parents praise the way the teaching caters for their child's needs. One saying, 'the staff manage to get the best out of every child because they tailor their teaching to the children's level of understanding and always make it fun'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together to support the learning of individuals and small groups. This ensures that tasks are very carefully matched to each individual pupil's learning needs and broken down into small steps that build very well towards pupils' targets.
- Teachers make excellent use of regular assessment to record the gains pupils make in their learning, towards their realistic but challenging targets. The very high quality of comments on pupils' work show the progress that they make very well. However, they do not always identify what pupils' next steps for learning are on their daily observation sheets. Teachers share pupils' achievement very well with parents and carers but not all teachers then go on to explain what the next small steps for learning are and how they might support this at home.
- The school promotes pupils' communication and early literacy skills highly effectively. Staff use a wide variety of approaches to help pupils understand including signing, pictures, objects and symbols. They make sure that individual pupils have the right equipment, including technological aids, to enable them to communicate and to understand in lessons. For example, a pupil who was unable to use speech to indicate his choice of activity was able to operate a 'technological aid' that spoke for him.
- The teaching of reading and writing is outstanding. Teachers take full account of how each pupil learns best to ensure that they make the most progress they can. A range of sensory stories and activities are all put to good use. The variety of activities enable all pupils to be included and to take part at their own

level. Pupils develop excellent attitudes to books and stories and make marks in different ways with pens, crayon and paint with great pride.

- Numeracy is taught extremely well and in ways such as through problem-solving that give real meaning and understanding to number for pupils. Lessons are frequently a hive of activity with the teacher and teaching assistants using a variety of methods and resources, including rhymes, songs and music to capture pupils' attention and engage their interest.
- The most able pupils can read with expression and write short sentences describing the characters in the books that they are reading. They are aware of how they can improve their work and what their individual targets should be. This was illustrated beautifully when an inspector asked a pupil during an observation if she could talk to him, He very politely said 'No, because I am not allowed to chat during lessons.'

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils at Key Stages 1 to 4, children in the early years and in the sixth form, including those with autism, profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and complex needs, make outstanding progress from their low starting points on joining the school. This is because outstanding teaching ensures that activities are very carefully matched to pupils' learning needs so that they learn exceptionally well.
- Pupils' work and assessment profiles, together with visits to lessons show they make outstanding progress across different areas of learning. They make outstanding progress in communication as a result of highly effective support and joint planning by teachers and therapists.
- 'Excellence Teams' led by middle leaders have designed and developed their own assessment systems for recording and demonstrating progress in personal and social health education. These show that pupils make outstanding progress in these areas. This is reflected in their 'rapidly growing self-esteem and confidence, their eagerness to learn and their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The achievement of pupils with profound complex needs is a particular strength of the school. Pupils with the most profound difficulties develop effective ways of expressing themselves, making choices and responding to activities through gesture, movement and vocalising. Other pupils who are unable to speak make outstanding progress in learning to communicate through signing and using pictures and symbols to express themselves. This enables them to take an active part in lessons and supports their progress in all areas of learning.
- The most able pupils learn about the sounds that letters make (phonics) and are able to read with expression by the time they are in Key Stage 4. They label pictures using symbols and text and are able to identify the letters some sounds begin with. They proudly write a series of sentences in text and symbols, and take great care to form their letters accurately.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make the same outstanding progress as their classmates in communication, literacy and numeracy as a result of well targeted use of the additional funding to provide additional support.
- Through enrichment activities and participation in an arts award, pupils are also given every opportunity to succeed in a wide range of creative and physical activities. The choir and orchestra enjoy singing and playing and some have performed at the Cliffs Pavilion in Southend. They were very excited to hear that they are going to perform at the London Palladium in a few months time and 'glow' with pride.
- The older pupils are thoroughly prepared for the next stage in their lives. The school works tirelessly to ensure a smooth transition to life after school. The sixth form leaders and the headteacher ensure that all students leave the sixth form for appropriate destinations in further education.

- Pupils who take part in a construction course get a real sense of achievement from being able to take part in 'real' work-related activities. They talk very positively about their experiences and are proud of the skills they learn, for example bricklaying.

The early years provision is outstanding

- The leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. Leaders have ensured all aspects of the provision are outstanding. Staff have very thorough systems for assessing what children can do when they join the school. These show that the children enter nursery with skills and abilities well below those typical for their age.
- Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding both of the learning needs of each child and of the early years curriculum. This means that children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning...
- Children rapidly settle into routines and make particularly strong progress in their communication skills and in their personal, social and emotional development because staff ensure that signing and communication aids are used consistently well to support these. All this, and the very positive relationships and attitudes that children have to their learning mean they are very well prepared to move into Year 1.
- Children are very happy and very eager to join in their activities. They display high levels of concentration, imagination and curiosity about the world around them.
- Children stay extremely safe and their behaviour is outstanding because staff consistently apply the school's robust policies and procedures to ensure their health, safety and well being.

The sixth form provision is outstanding

- All aspects of the sixth form, including its leadership and management are outstanding. As in other areas of the school a key focus is on improving and developing communication, personal social and independence skills.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding, resulting from outstanding teaching over time. Teaching and the experiences provided build on the strengths, interests and aspirations of each individual pupil. The curriculum therefore has real relevance and meaning to them so that they are motivated, eager to learn and able to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in a variety of different settings.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their basic skills and undertake work-related activities, including work experience in the local community to increase their employability. They learn the importance of wearing correct clothing for certain jobs. For example, all pupils wore chef uniforms when taking part in cooking activities. Those that spend time working on construction activities know they have to wear protective and safety clothing and handle equipment in very specific ways.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are outstanding, reflected in their high attendance. Pupils are confident and co-operative, helpful and highly supportive towards one another. They gain great enjoyment from the activities the school provides, taking great pride in their work and helping the younger pupils in the school at break and lunchtimes.
- Rigorous systems ensure that pupils are kept safe. Students receive a great deal of support in learning how to keep themselves safe as they become increasingly more independent, including through learning to travel by themselves.

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	115469
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	448929

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	26
Appropriate authority	Essex
Chair	Sheridan Leigh
Headteacher	Judith Salter
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2012
Telephone number	01268 792575
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