

Wolverdene Special School

22 Love Lane, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 2AF

Inspection dates		November 2012	
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.

- Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and abilities. They enjoy learning and have very productive relationships with the adults they work with.
- Adults manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and consistently so that in lessons and around the school it is generally good. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere for learning throughout the school. Pupils say that they feel safe and are able to recognise unsafe situations they might encounter and act accordingly.
- Leaders and managers at all levels share an ambitious vision that results in high expectations for staff and pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Leaders are driving continuous improvement through accurate and timely checking of the school's work and rigorous management of the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently good or better.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has not been as rapid as it has been in English. Teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to respond to the helpful advice they are given when teachers mark their work.
- The curriculum has been designed carefully to meet the needs and interests of pupils. However, the school grounds are not used sufficiently to broaden the range of stimulating practical activities which pupils can participate in.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons, looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- He discussed with teachers and other staff their professional development, the management of their performance and the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- The inspector reviewed documents relating to governance, school improvement, pupil conduct and the monitoring of teaching and learning. He considered reports produced by a local authority adviser and the school's data for showing pupils' attainment and progress.
- He held conversations with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the school improvement adviser, a consultant responsible for children in local authority care, groups of pupils, and school leaders and managers.
- The inspector took account of 15 inspection questionnaires completed by school staff, recent questionnaires used by the school to gather parents' views and five responses entered on Parent View.

Inspection team

Robert Ellis, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wolverdene is a small special school for primary school aged children who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Many have autistic spectrum disorders and complex needs.
- The school has residential provision for 10 pupils in 'The Lodge'. This provision is inspected separately.
- Most pupils have speech and language difficulties.
- Pupils come from a wide geographical area and some have long journeys to and from school each day.
- Many pupils are referred to Wolverdene late in their primary school career and stay only a short time before transferring to secondary school. Recently, additional younger pupils have been admitted to the school.
- Almost half the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is government funding targeted to support pupils entitled to free school meals, for children in local authority care and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- Pupils are organised into five classes according to their ages and needs. Pupils are placed in ability groups for mathematics and English and other subjects are taught in class groups.
- The current headteacher has led the school since January 2011, following the retirement of the previous headteacher in September 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils making good or better progress in mathematics by:
 - reducing the amount of worksheets that are used and providing pupils with more opportunities to do practical tasks and solve problems
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills during mathematical activities
 - ensuring that pupils have regular planned opportunities to respond to the helpful advice given when teachers mark their work.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - investigating how the outside areas could be used more effectively to enable pupils to explore their environment and participate in a wider range of challenging and stimulating practical activities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When pupils join the school, they are working well below the standards for their ages found nationally in most subjects. Most pupils make rapid progress in their learning so that by the time they leave the school many have made better than expected progress. Standards remain below average, but the school is narrowing the gap between attainment of the school's pupils and the average for all pupils nationally.
- The school has introduced several initiatives to support pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. These include the appointment of a speech and language assistant, a dance, movement and occupational therapist, and staffing for the assessment and reintegration team who support pupils who find it difficult to work in a classroom environment. The impact of these initiatives can be seen in a significant reduction in exclusions and an acceleration of pupils' progress.
- The gaps in average point scores, a measure used to compare overall attainment between all the different groups of pupils, are closing rapidly. The average point scores for the school's pupils eligible for the pupil premium increased by two points between 2011 and 2012, which is roughly equivalent to catching up almost a year's work.
- Despite their low starting points and previous problems with learning, most pupils are making better than expected progress and are on track to achieve challenging targets.
- Rapid progress has been made in developing pupils' reading, writing and comprehension skills. Pupils have good strategies to sound out unfamiliar words and demonstrate resilience when reading challenging texts. Most pupils show that they enjoy reading.
- The school has focused less on mathematics and, although improvements have been made, progress has been less dramatic. The school rightly recognises that there needs to be a sharper focus on developing pupils' mathematical skills in the future.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and improving, but not consistently strong enough to be outstanding. Most of the teaching seen was good or better, but a few lessons did not enable pupils to make rapid progress and therefore required improvement to be good.
- Most teachers set work that is hard enough and which builds on pupils' previous learning. Work which is done in pupils' exercise books is generally marked thoroughly and teachers give good advice on how pupils can improve or develop their work. Pupils are not always given sufficient time to respond to this advice and complete unfinished work or make corrections, particularly in mathematics.
- In the lessons with good or outstanding teaching, teachers show that they have a clear understanding of how children learn. They plan their lessons so that there are opportunities for pupils to work together and to work by themselves. Skilful questioning ensures that teachers know what pupils have understood and whether they are ready to move on. At the end of lessons, pupils are encouraged to judge their own progress towards their targets. This develops their ability to work independently.
- Teaching assistants are trained well and used efficiently. Adults work as a team and any poor behaviour is addressed quickly so that it does not slow down learning.
- Teachers can measure accurately the progress that pupils make and swiftly address any potential underperformance because they carry out regular and well-organised checks.
- In some mathematics lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunity to tackle realistic practical problems which require them to think for themselves and there is an over reliance on the use of worksheets, which limits the opportunities that they have to practise their writing skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand what behaviour the school expects and respond positively to the school's reward system that recognises positive behaviour and achievement. When misbehaviour in lessons does occur it is managed well and pupils are quickly back to learning and making a positive contribution to the lesson. Pupils say that they feel safe and that adults will listen to them if they have a problem. Relationships are positive and pupils are confident that any concerns that they raise will be dealt with promptly.
- The school provides a friendly and welcoming community. Discrimination is not tolerated and pupils from different backgrounds socialise and learn together well. Exclusions have reduced significantly because staff respond consistently to calm any potentially difficult situation that might arise. They know what solution works best for each individual pupil.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying and say that instances of bullying are uncommon. They are aware of safety issues that they might face when using the internet and how to keep safe on the road.
- Most pupils attend school regularly and the school has supported and challenged well those pupils who previously had poor attendance so that they attend more regularly.
- The school's positive and caring ethos supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, particularly their moral and social development. A good range of trips, visits and other enrichment activities enables pupils to explore different areas of interest.
- Pupils' behaviour improves significantly while pupils are at the school. The points system that the school uses ensures that pupils and their parents know, on a daily and weekly basis, how successful pupils are in taking responsibility for improving their own behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, the standards achieved by pupils, particularly in English, have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders rigorously check and judge the school's work and use the information to plan the next stages of its improvement. The leaders scrutinise teaching particularly thoroughly and check the extent to which improvements in teaching are leading to improvements in the standards that pupils reach. All teachers have performance targets that are linked to accelerating pupils' progress. Arrangements for teachers' performance management are robust and closely linked to salary progression.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A strong feature of the curriculum is how it focuses on the individual pupil and develops his or her resilience and independence. Pupils engage in a variety of enrichment activities, including visits to a local museum, horse riding and visits from authors of children's books. These activities further enhance their personal experiences and learning.
- Good use is made of classrooms and further work is being done to improve the accommodation inside the building. The outside areas are underused and opportunities to provide activities that are not feasible in a classroom are missed. The lack of outdoor spaces that can be used in all weathers limits opportunities for learning.
- The school has developed good and productive partnerships with other schools, local organisations and education, care and health professionals to support pupils' learning and personal development. Local authority advisers have been used well to confirm the school's view of how well it is doing and to improve teaching.
- The views of parents are sought regularly. School and inspection evidence shows that most have few, if any, complaints. The school works closely with parents to keep them informed and help them to support their children's learning.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have had training so that they are able to interpret data about pupils' progress and standards. They monitor all aspects of the school's work and are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are not reliant on information provided by the school but visit regularly to check for themselves. They have a sharp focus on how well pupils are doing and keep a close check on how teachers are held to account for their work. Although governors are involved in weighing up the work of the school, their evaluation role is not defined clearly in the school improvement plan. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and adults who work with the pupils receive regular and appropriate training in keeping children safe. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements.

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	116635
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	401610

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Cooper
Headteacher	Paul Van Walwyk
Date of previous school inspection	December 2009
Telephone number	01264 362350
Fax number	01264 396600
Email address	adminoffice@wolverdene.hants.sch.uk

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