

Kennel Lane School

Kennel Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire RG42 2EX

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, senior leaders and governors, has worked with resilience, determination and ambition to bring about far-reaching school improvements. Pupils have remained at the heart of this drive for improvement.
- Senior leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' outcomes. The school community is ambitious to be outstanding in every respect.
- Systems to ensure pupils are kept safe, and to promote personal development and good behaviour, are outstanding. This is because pupils' welfare is understood by all staff to be paramount. No stone is left unturned in securing the exact help that pupils and families need.
- Teachers plan and assess carefully, ensuring that lessons are interesting. Pupils typically progress and learn well, including in the development of their communication skills.
- All aspects of the early years provision are of the highest quality. Consequently, the youngest children in school get off to the best possible start.
- Learners aged 16 and over benefit from a range of study programmes, including vocational qualification routes. The support for transitions beyond school is extensive.
- Therapy is an important, integral aspect of pupils' education. This is planned uniquely for each pupil.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some leaders, particularly middle leaders, are very new to post. In such cases, actions and initiatives planned are yet to impact upon pupils' outcomes.
- Teaching and outcomes in science and computing are not as good as in other subjects.
- Occasionally, teaching does not challenge pupils, particularly the most able, well enough. Consequently, learning and progress are not maximised.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and achievement to consistently be outstanding by ensuring that the most-able pupils are consistently challenged in their learning and are able to make maximum progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in science and computing by:
 - ensuring that lessons build on accurate assessments of what pupils know and the identified gaps in their learning
 - ensuring a suitably experienced member of staff is appointed to take responsibility for improvements in computing.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring newly appointed middle leaders continue to receive the support and guidance required to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and governors have created a culture where high ambitions for pupils abound. This is exemplified by the school's positive atmosphere and their success in addressing weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment accurately and in depth, using a range of methods to support experienced and new teachers to improve. Weak teaching has been eradicated. Individual pupils or groups of pupils making slow progress are also identified and additional support is swiftly provided. Consequently, almost all pupils progress well.
- Senior leaders and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school in detail. Plans for improvement include further raising outcomes in science and computing, and developing middle leadership. Actions taken to increase rates of progress in science are already making a positive difference.
- Many middle leaders are new in post and therefore their plans are at the early stages of development. They are an enthusiastic and able group, who are clear about what they need to do to support senior leaders and secure faster progress and better outcomes for pupils. It is too soon to see any impact of their early work.
- Responsibility for computing is currently allocated on a temporary basis.
- The range of subjects taught is broad for all pupils. Regular trips, visits and extra-curricular activities, such as performing arts and horse riding, have sparked interest in pupils' lives beyond school. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development and progress well.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is woven throughout the school's curriculum. Topics such as 'Being a friend' help pupils to develop tolerance, empathy and fair play. Assemblies are often used to reflect upon moral messages.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, many demonstrate a deep understanding of right and wrong. Pupils experience making choices and taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions. This helps to prepare pupils well for the future.
- Pupil premium funding (additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and looked after children) is used to provide a number of activities, including breakfast club. Leaders track and analyse this spending to establish what helps pupils most. Pupils entitled to this funding achieve at least as well or better than their peers in school. Additional sports funding has enabled pupils to experience a greater range of high-quality sporting activities.
- Leaders are tireless in supporting parents. A recent workshop enabled parents to understand the ways in which their child's progress is measured. All parents who attended would recommend the session to other parents.
- Leaders work collaboratively with a range of schools and the local authority to identify and share good practice. The work of the local authority has contributed effectively to raising the quality of teaching and learning, and to the school's understanding of rigorous self-evaluation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - has improved quickly as the school has improved. Governors are a highly skilled and effective group. They fulfil all statutory duties and are closely involved in providing valuable support and challenge to the school's senior leaders. They fully understand how the school has improved and what more needs to be done.
 - ensures that performance management arrangements are effective and that salary progression is based on merit. Governors know how the school uses pupil premium funding and the difference this makes to pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This is because those with responsibility and all other adults understand the needs of pupils and work intensively with families. The school has responded quickly and appropriately when pupils are at risk. Leaders persistently pursue high-quality support and advice. Pupils are taught well and consistently about how to stay safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- There have been considerable improvements in the quality of teaching, especially in the last year. Higher

expectations of what pupils can achieve have become part of the daily life of the school. A key factor in the improved quality of teaching has been effective lesson monitoring and good quality professional development for teachers so that they improve their practice.

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good because teachers and support staff use their subject knowledge, skills and expertise well to plan interesting lessons. Consequently, pupils engage readily, enjoy their lessons and make good progress. On occasions, when pupils demonstrate understanding, teachers do not amend the task and therefore pupils cannot make the maximum possible progress, this is particularly so for the most-able pupils. In the early years, teaching is outstanding and children make rapid gains in their learning.
- Teachers now follow agreed, structured, approaches to teaching reading, writing, mathematics and communication. Pupils have made better progress since these approaches have been adopted.
- In a Key Stage 1 physical education lesson, pupils responded with a real sense of joy as 'The Dingle Dangle Scarecrow' played on the sound system. Pupils crouched and then leapt into the air, representing the scarecrow coming to life. While having fun, pupils were developing coordination, fine and gross motor control, and were reinforcing skills such as listening and following instructions. This sense of fun in learning is commonplace.
- Adults diligently assess learning and use this information to plan lessons and individual activities that are usually pitched at the correct level. During the last year, this did not happen successfully in science or computing. Although teaching in science has been strengthened and pupils are now making faster progress, further improvements are required to ensure pupils continue to catch up and achieve as well as in English and mathematics. Computing remains a priority area. In this subject, teachers are not routinely meeting the learning needs of pupils with varying levels of competency. Consequently, progress is significantly slower than in any other subject.
- Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and in line with the school's policy, carefully recording what the pupils can do on their own and what they have needed help to achieve. Some pupils are given written guidance about how they can improve their work and some are told by adults. This helps pupils to think about their learning and to make further progress.
- Pupils frequently undertake tasks that help promote their independence skills, including making choices and working with others. Pupils in the inclusion class at Birch Hill Primary School extended this further as they took responsibility for leading workshops for the school's own Year 5 pupils. They supported these pupils well by making suggestions about the most suitable materials and colours pupils might need to complete activities such as making Divas for their Diwali theme.
- Class teachers often plan lessons that help pupils to understand and experience feelings such as respect and empathy. After planting handmade poppies in the garden, pupils in a Key Stage 2 class handled medals, listened to music and looked at pictures of soldiers in the First World War. Pupils were encouraged to think about soldiers and people who help us.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff care deeply for the pupils in the school. Positive and trusting relationships facilitate pupils' growing confidence and increasing levels of independence, including with their learning. Pupils know what to do to succeed; as one reported, 'We try hard, we work hard, we behave very well'.
- Carefully thought-out targets linked to pupils' physical, communication and emotional needs are woven into all learning opportunities. Detailed records, as well as feedback from parents and pupils, demonstrate the positive impact on pupils' physical and emotional development and well-being.
- Pupils understand about physical and emotional safety. For example, detailed work has been completed regarding staying safe when using the internet and social media. Pupils know that there are different forms of bullying and, without exception, all pupils have a way of communicating concerns to adults when necessary.
- Opportunities to practise skills, such as using public transport and crossing roads safely, are a part of the everyday work of the school. This maximises pupils' independence skills and their ability to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils attending the Birch Hill Primary School inclusion class are afforded varied opportunities to work and play alongside their mainstream peers. Such experiences promote pupils' self-confidence particularly well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- On the very rare occasions that pupils say something inappropriate or express stereotypical thoughts, staff challenge this and support pupils to reconsider their attitudes. This strongly promotes positive conduct.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and disruptive behaviour is increasingly unusual. Incidents of poor behaviour are managed expertly in line with school policies. There is little disruption to learning.
- The school environment, inside and out, is clean and enticing. Pupils respect the environment and are proud of their contributions, such as wall displays and the building of a sensory garden. Many pupils, including the elected school council, take on tasks that develop their understanding of responsibility and self-discipline.
- Attendance is above average for special schools. The vast majority of pupils arrive punctually and are ready to learn. Leaders are not complacent about the very small minority of pupils whose attendance is too low and have excellent systems in place to follow up any unexplained absence.
- Pupils throughout the school are polite, friendly and well-mannered. For example, a younger pupil rushed to the classroom door to open it for an inspector and was appropriately rewarded by adults for their thoughtfulness.
- Pupils attending the inclusion class behave as well as all other pupils at Kennel Lane School. They work hard, and are friendly and polite to adults and one another.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils in all key stages and in most subject areas make at least good progress. This is demonstrated in the school's meticulous records of pupils' progress as well as in workbooks and portfolios that chronicle learning. Ninety per cent of pupils made at least expected progress across the school in the core and foundation subjects last academic year. Published national data does not reflect pupils' positive achievements as their starting points and rates of progress are significantly below national averages.
- Pupils' communication, literacy and numeracy skills are promoted particularly well across the school. This is the result of consistent approaches in English and mathematics lessons, which are followed through in all other subjects and extra-curricular activities. For example, in a forest school session, Key Stage 3 pupils had to count discs of wood, listen to and then explain instructions before making a collage.
- Attainment in almost all subjects has improved since the previous inspection and continues to rise. Weaknesses in science are being addressed and pupils are now making up for lost ground in this subject.
- Computing has not improved in line with other subjects, resulting from inconsistent leadership and teaching. Only 44% of pupils made at least expected progress in this subject last year, which is way below progress in all other subject areas.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making good or better progress compares favourably to the progress of all pupils in the school. Children who are looked after by the local authority achieve well. However, the most-able pupils in school do not always make as much progress as they could.
- Large numbers of pupils join the school during the primary phase, typically having experienced disrupted education in other schools. Targeted support helps such pupils to catch up and gaps quickly close.
- Pupils who attend the Birch Hill Primary School inclusion class typically make more rapid progress than others in this school across all subjects. This reflects the comparatively less complex needs of these pupils.
- Pupils are thoroughly prepared for transitions between key stages and for life beyond school. For example, older pupils frequently go shopping and practise budgeting. Younger pupils prepare for transition, including through visiting classes in other parts of the school.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children get off to an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Leaders have ensured that all aspects of provision, including the environment, quality of resources and quality of teaching are of a consistently high standard. Consequently, the effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- Highly skilled leaders, teachers and support staff understand precisely the needs of, and the challenges faced by, the children and their families. Children's welfare, physical and emotional development and early communication skills are afforded the highest priorities.
- Staff work in close partnership with families, therapists and external support services. This secures a

shared understanding of children's needs, and appropriate packages of support are put in place. Parents cannot speak highly enough of the help they receive and of the progress that they have witnessed in their children.

- In both Nursery and Reception, each child's learning is planned in tiny, achievable steps. Consequently, children meet with success, learn to enjoy school, make great progress and achieve exceptionally well.
- From the earliest days in school, children are helped to understand about positive behaviour and are rewarded for their efforts.
- There are no gaps between the achievement of children entitled to additional funding and their peers.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Good leadership is driving improving outcomes. Leaders continually evaluate the quality of learning experiences on offer to the older learners and implement improvements swiftly. Recently, all learners have chosen to stay on at school rather than leaving to attend alternative placements. This reflects the atmosphere of ambition, and the confidence learners and families have in the quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Teachers ensure that English, mathematics and phonics continue to be delivered consistently to older learners and, as a result, they make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Learners benefit from a broad range of subjects and in most, as in the rest of the school, effective teaching ensures that learners progress well. For example, in a lively citizenship lesson, learners considered the factors that might lead to criminal behaviour and identified which of these aspects might be most critical. Learners were highly motivated and participated eagerly, working on their own and in small group tasks.
- Learners are well supported in lessons to develop maximum independence and the curriculum is tailored to individual learners' needs and strengths. An example of this is the recently introduced eye gaze technology, which enables learners to play a more active part in learning. Occasionally, learners are not fully stretched by teaching activities; at these times learners make less progress that they could. With guidance, learners select from a broad range of vocational and academic subjects and accreditations, including in horticulture and construction. All learners' study programmes are appropriate for their learning needs.
- Leaders ensure that learners receive impartial careers advice. This has been achieved by accessing support from the local authority adviser, working in collaboration with local schools and implementing a career development programme with the aim that all learners will be able to access paid employment in the future.
- External college provision is quality assured by school staff to make sure learners are taught and learn well. Risk assessments are undertaken to keep learners safe. College placements make a significant, positive contribution to the 16 to 19 study programme.
- Learners value work experience highly. It helps them to understand the world of work and to make informed choices about their own futures. Leaders are building business partnerships and apprenticeships that all groups of learners can access.
- Learners' behaviour is outstanding. Older learners act as role models and mix well with younger pupils at break times. Feedback from providers highlights the very positive attitudes of learners and especially their resilience when facing new challenges.
- School leavers achieve a range of accredited outcomes because they are highly personalised to the needs of individual learners. At the end of the last academic year, all learners secured an appropriate college place, apprenticeship or alternative provision.

School details

Unique reference number	110190
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10005229

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Shillcock
Headteacher	Andrea de Bunsen
Telephone number	01344 483872
Website	www.kennellaneschool.com
Email address	head@kennellaneschool.com
Date of previous inspection	6–7 November 2013

Information about this school

- Kennel Lane is a special school for pupils aged from two to 19 years of age, most of whom have severe learning difficulties.
- All pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes within each key stage.
- Approximately one quarter of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding). This is in line with the national average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Half of all pupils join the school at different stages of their school career and at different times of the year.
- Twelve primary-aged pupils attend an inclusion class at Birch Hill Primary School, Bracknell for four days each week.
- The majority of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 pupils attend college placements on a part-time basis at Reading College, Berkshire College of Agriculture, and Bracknell and Wokingham College.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in over 30 lessons. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors to approximately half of all observations.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- The work of pupils was checked to establish what they know, understand and can do. Inspectors heard a selection of pupils reading aloud during their lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed the minutes of the governing body's meetings.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, scrutinised information about pupils' achievement and progress, and examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and welfare. Inspectors also looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work, including performance management records, school improvement planning and self-evaluation documents.
- The inspection took into account the views of 33 responses to the online Parent View survey received during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the 44 staff questionnaires returned during the inspection.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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