

Hazel Oak School

Hazeloak Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 2AZ

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Hazel Oak is an outstanding school where pupils are happy and learn exceptionally well, and where staff ensure that they are safe.
- All aspects of the school's work are outstanding and have improved since the last inspection. This is because the purposeful and determined leadership of the headteacher has ensured that all staff give of their best and that all of the pupils are given every opportunity to achieve and experience success.
- Pupils benefit from a range of memorable, creative activities that interest, motivate and challenge them to do their very best.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught across a wide range of subjects as well as individually and this results in all pupils making excellent progress.
- Art and the use of computers are strengths of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons are outstanding. They enjoy school and take part in lessons and activities with enthusiasm. Attendance is above average when compared to similar schools.
- Those in Year 11 and the sixth form are extremely well prepared for their futures and the world of work.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students enjoy courses that are very well matched to their needs. They are confident and sociable young adults.
- The governing body brings a wide range of personal and professional skills to the school. These are used highly effectively to make sure governors have a clear and accurate view of the school, and so challenge and support the leadership team fully.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons, all of which were joint observations with senior leaders. They reviewed work in classrooms and around the school, and heard several pupils reading.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, a psychotherapist and life coach, members of the governing body and the school council. They talked to an external consultant and a local authority representative by telephone.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation, including information about safeguarding and attendance, governors' minutes, school development plans and evaluation, lesson planning and data about checks on teaching, and information regarding pupils' progress and subject developments.
- They took account of the 24 responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, a letter sent in by a parent and a recent parental survey carried out by the school. They also reviewed questionnaires completed by 35 staff.

Inspection team

Lynda Walker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hazel Oak is a large special school designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, which includes a sixth form.
- The school is currently in the process of extending its capacity and thirty additional places are to be available in 2015.
- One third of the pupils have an autistic spectrum condition, and increasing numbers of pupils have emotional and social difficulties. There are three times as many boys as girls. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding given to the school for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children with a parent in the armed forces and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has specialist status for business and enterprise.
- The school works in collaboration with 13 primary, secondary and other special schools in Solihull.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Carry out its plans to extend support for mainstream schools concerning provision for children with learning difficulties and autism spectrum conditions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Detailed information gathered by staff about the learning and development of each pupil shows outstanding progress, including in literacy and numeracy. When their starting points are considered, the achievement of less-able and more-able pupils is equally remarkable. Pupils develop skills in a wide range of subjects, and are particularly good at using tablet computers, for example to take photographs, to record their ideas and to research information.
- Every pupil in Year 11 achieves success in Entry Level qualifications and many achieve GCSE passes in a range of subjects. The most-able pupils are challenged very well and make excellent progress, achieving good GCSE passes in both English and mathematics. Pupils have been particularly successful in achieving high grades in GCSE art. Some members of the sixth form achieve AS-level passes.
- All pupils achieve equally well, regardless of their background, special educational needs or gender. The careful analysis of assessment information ensures that if individual pupils are not progressing as expected, additional help and support is quickly put in place by the access and inclusion team. Providing equal opportunities for all pupils is central to the school's vision and there is no discrimination.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make the same outstanding progress as others with similar starting points. The additional money is used effectively to help those eligible to catch up in English and mathematics and the school uses a variety of checks to make sure pupils are doing as well as they can. In some classes they are now performing better than their classmates in mathematics.
- Additional funding for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up with their learning is used well on additional resources for English and mathematics. This contributes to these pupils' outstanding achievements and positive attitudes.
- Pupils achieve well in areas of communication and in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils receive regular and systematic help to improve their reading, writing and spelling. For example the most-able pupils understand how to use suffixes in words and less able pupils learn how to break down simple words by sounding out letters and then blending them together to form the word.
- Pupils' work is neatly presented and shows the progress they make. It also shows how pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work. Teachers' comments are positive and encouraging and pupils are very clear about what their academic targets are and what they need to do to achieve them.
- Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress in both academic and vocational (work-related) study. This was evident in a hair and beauty lesson where the students were learning about different massage techniques and, more generally, shows in the way they focus intently on their studies, acquiring good quality accreditation by the time they leave school. The vocational education and work experience opportunities prepare them extremely well for further training and employment.
- The progress pupils make in their personal, social and moral development is outstanding. Pupils move through the school developing from individuals who find it difficult to socialise or play with each other to being highly sociable, polite and extremely well behaved young people with a

strong sense of right and wrong. As one parent commented 'my son's path has been nurtured, supported and allowed to self develop'.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Students' excellent progress is underpinned by the good and outstanding teaching in all subjects across the school. Staff treat pupils with warmth and enormous respect. These superb relationships contribute greatly to pupils' learning. They are confident in trying new experiences because they know that they staff will look after them. However, staff do not do things for the pupils that they can be expected to do for themselves; this was evident in a Year 2 cookery lesson where pupils spread butter onto the bread themselves, cut up tomatoes and washed up their own utensils.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge means that pupils are always exposed to the correct subject language and explanation of meanings. This results in pupils acquiring strong subject knowledge as they move through the school.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to lessons. This is partly because teachers give them a very clear picture of what they are aiming for and what they want to do, but also because they use their initiative and use questions really well to check how much pupils have learnt and push them a little bit further.
- Staff are very confident about what they can achieve for pupils and their expectations are high. From the start to the end of the school day, staff and pupils have a clear sense of purpose and a sharp focus on work, learning and making progress. All pupils spoken to knew exactly what their targets were and what they needed to do to improve.
- Wall displays praise pupils' achievements as well as providing excellent reinforcement for learning. This was evident in a mathematics lesson where pupils could refer to the key words they needed to record information. It was also illustrated in an English lesson where all of the class were genuinely pleased for one of their classmates who had his name recorded on the 'WOW' chart for excellent work.
- Teachers continually improve on their skills through regular training, which in turn helps to provide wider learning opportunities for the pupils. As one member of staff commented 'Hazel Oak is a supportive place to work; everyone strives to make learning a positive, effective and progressive experience for the pupils'.
- Teachers use a wide range of visits, residential trips and visitors to enhance learning further and to make it relevant to the lives of pupils. In Key Stages 3 and 4 there is an increasing emphasis on business and social enterprise to make sure that pupils are prepared for the world of work.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is outstanding because it promotes interest and high achievement. The focus is very much on preparing for the world outside school and following accredited courses, which will enable them to take Level 1 and 2 courses when they move on to college.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Procedures for the management of behaviour are excellent and all of the pupils respond very positively to the 'DOJO' system where they can earn points for

excellent work, behaviour and attitudes.

- Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations staff place on them. They are determined and work hard at meeting expectations for their best behaviour and treating everyone with respect and positive regard.
- Friendships and good relationships flourish among pupils and these encourage their communication and social skills. Pupils who start school with low confidence quickly find the will to join in and make their contributions, formally in lessons and informally elsewhere.
- There is a harmonious and supportive atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils go out of their way to help others. They have a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour and, because they are relaxed and happy, they socialise well. This has a positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is above average and improving. Pupils attend their lessons punctually and settle into learning very quickly.
- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is outstanding, as all pupils are taught about how to be safe in everyday life from a very early stage. This was evident in a Year 2 literacy lesson where pupils confidently explained why you needed to be careful when playing computer games with people you did not know.
- As pupils progress through the school they are given broader guidance on healthy lifestyles, drugs usage, the various forms of bullying and e-safety and by the time they are in the sixth form their awareness of health and safety is a real strength of the school. The school environment is a safe and secure place to be. All pupils spoken to stated that they feel safe, and parents agree with this point of view.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Calm but uncompromising leadership by the headteacher sets the tone for the whole school. Rigorous and regular self-evaluation of each aspect of the work of the school has led to detailed planning for improvement and there is a real sense of shared responsibility for achieving the identified priorities. Senior and other leaders, teachers, assistants, support staff and governors all work together as a team. There is never a sense of something being someone else's job.
- Leaders make excellent use of the national standards for teaching and are uncompromising in their drive to maintain the very high quality of teachers' skills. Teachers themselves are fully aware of the teachers' standards and work hard to achieve them. They are also very appreciative of the opportunities and support they are given to improve their own personal and professional development.
- The school has rigorous systems to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress. Clearly thought out extra help is given to support any pupil at risk of not achieving their targets. Close working relationships with therapists and other professionals ensure the emotional health and well-being of the pupils are supported.
- The school has restructured its arrangements for allocating responsibilities. As a result, a wider range of staff are leading aspects of the school's development, and this is having a positive effect on ensuring improvements. The sixth form is led extremely well, and teaching and progress of pupils are closely monitored.

- In preparation for the new National Curriculum, which is being introduced in September 2014, the school has established a new way of planning and teaching lessons. It is innovative and exciting, providing activities as close to real-life situations as possible. This has not only enhanced pupils' enjoyment of learning, but provides meaning and so helps to lead to excellent progress.
- Staff have built up excellent relationships with parents who on the whole are very positive about the school. Almost all who responded would recommend the school to another parent.
- There are some excellent links with local schools and businesses. These help to develop pupils' academic and personal skills and provide opportunities to prepare pupils for the future.
- The school provides training and support for schools in its local collaborative group. It rightly plans to extend this further in order to improve opportunities for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the area.
- Leaders successfully eliminate discrimination through their very effective implementation of policies and procedures which make sure positive relationships are fostered and that all pupils have equal opportunities to the experiences on offer.
- The primary sports funding is used effectively to provide further training to staff on how to teach a range of sports. This has resulted in pupils being fully engaged in their physical education lessons and in some cases extending their involvement in sporting activities outside school.
- The local authority provides regular, relevant and skilled advice and challenge through its schools advisory service. This has had a good impact in helping the school improve its provision since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is outstanding and meets all statutory duties such as those relating to safeguarding and preventing discrimination.
 - Governors have the experience and expertise to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively. They are deeply committed to the school's continued success, as is evident in their plans for the planned expansion of the school roll.
 - They are very well organised into committees which focus sharply on the key aspects of the work of the school. They visit the school regularly and see for themselves that high achievement is maintained, by taking part in learning walks which concentrate on particular areas, for example safeguarding or behaviour.
 - Governors understand data on the school's performance and know how good teaching is. They are fully aware of the link between teachers' performance, pupils' achievement, pay and responsibility. They have been effectively involved in school self-evaluation and they oversee the schools' finances capably.

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	104130
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	431136

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	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Kendrick
Headteacher	Deborah Jenkins
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2011
Telephone number	0121 744 4162
Fax number	0121 733 8861
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