

Queensmill School

1 Askham Road, Shepherd's Bush, London W12 0NW

Inspection dates 15–16 October 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

- The experience and expertise of the headteacher have enabled her over many years to maintain the very highest achievement.
- The headteacher has developed an outstanding team of senior and middle leaders who have been exceptionally effective in maintaining and continually improving the quality of teaching and the pupils' achievement.
- Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's work. They provide a high level of informed challenge and support to the school's leaders.
- Teaching is consistently outstanding. Teachers and other adults demonstrate excellent skills in providing for the needs of pupils because of regular training.
- Teachers continually check on the pupils' progress and well-being. They tailor activities precisely to ensure each pupil makes the best possible progress. They have very high expectations of the pupils' achievement.
- Adults make excellent use of communication aids to promote the pupils' understanding and to help remove the barriers to learning experienced by pupils with complex learning needs.
- Leaders check the curriculum rigorously to ensure the pupils make the best progress that they can.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the sixth form is outstanding.
- Pupils across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the sixth form, make outstanding progress. A large and increasing majority of pupils achieve at levels higher than those of pupils with similar learning difficulties.
- The pupils make outstanding progress in their communication, literacy and numeracy and in their personal development.
- Outstanding management of pupils' behaviour underpins their success. Adults know their pupils very well and employ detailed procedures to ensure each pupil is relaxed and free from anxiety and can learn effectively in a safe environment.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. Parents confirm this. As a result, the pupils' attendance is above average and shows consistent improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons and parts of lessons, all of which were joint observations with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with teachers, senior and middle leaders, four members of the governing body, including the Chair, and a telephone conversation was conducted with a senior representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the school's surveys of parents' opinions about the school. There were insufficient entries on Parent View (the Ofsted online questionnaire) to be considered. The inspection team also took account of the 80 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including self-evaluation and development planning. Inspectors checked records of pupils' progress and behaviour since the previous inspection as well as monitoring reports on the quality of teaching and the range of subjects. Pupils' attendance records were analysed as well as all aspects of procedures relating to the safeguarding of the children.

Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides specifically for pupils with a diagnosis of autism. All the pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- There are a large proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, most of whom speak English as an additional language. There are many more boys than girls.
- A majority of the pupils are entitled to the pupil premium (additional government funding), because they are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after.
- About 30 pupils receive their education in a local primary school, and about 10 pupils attend a local secondary school. These pupils remain on the roll of Queensmill School but take part in mainstream classes as their individual abilities allow.
- School staff operate an outreach service for those pupils with a diagnosis of autism who attend mainstream schools in the local authority.
- At the beginning of the current term, the pupils and staff moved to the new school building.
- Provision for a small number of sixth form students began in September 2014. The school will open provision for students aged from 19 to 25 in September 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that members of staff present records of pupils' performance more clearly so that their achievements are more readily accessible.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- There is very strong leadership in the school, with effective distribution of responsibilities at all levels. Very able senior and middle leaders check the school's provision continually to ensure maintenance of the highest standards. Leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the sixth form have made sure that provision in these areas is highly effective.
- Leaders make sure that all staff have excellent opportunities to develop their skills. This has resulted in a school where adults greatly enjoy their work and strive to ensure the best provision for each pupil. There is exceptionally high morale.
- The drive of all adults to reflect on and improve their performance characterises the school. Leaders regularly check all aspects of teaching and the pupils' performance and consequently have an extremely accurate understanding of what is working well or could be improved. Governors are in turn very well informed and contribute effectively to the school's development. The well-established success of the school has not diminished leaders' commitment to maintain improvement. There is an outstanding capacity to sustain this improvement.
- The local authority maintains a 'light-touch' relationship with the school. Officers of the authority value highly the contribution the school makes in supporting pupils with a diagnosis of autism within the borough.
- Leaders maintain an excellent overview of the pupils' performance and ensure rapid intervention should a pupil's progress falter. The well-being and achievement of each pupil are at the heart of the school's work. Every child has an equal opportunity to succeed. There is no discrimination.
- Leaders including the governing body make sure that safeguarding and child protection procedures are followed diligently and fully meet statutory requirements.
- The school keeps very detailed and valuable records on every aspect of the pupils' achievements. On occasion, however, the sheer extent of recorded information obscures the pupils' outstanding progress.
- Leaders manage the performance of teachers very well. There are focused and rigorous checks on all aspects of the teachers' work. This is accompanied by supportive coaching and mentoring, using the best practice in the school to improve the quality of teaching further, particularly of newly qualified or less experienced staff. Procedures ensure suitable rewards for good teaching and rapid detection of any underachievement. All staff have an excellent understanding of autism. Further training and opportunities to take advanced qualifications enhance this knowledge.
- Teachers adapt activities exceptionally well for each pupil. The pupils have precise targets which incorporate the appropriate use of communication aids and sensory experiences. Throughout each lesson, teachers encourage the pupils' communication skills alongside their literacy and numeracy development. This reinforces their outstanding progress.
- The more-able pupils who attend local schools make excellent progress. There are exemplary relationships between Queensmill staff and teachers from the mainstream schools which ensure that pupils have a seamless transition into mainstream classes.
- The school makes good use of the additional government sports funding to purchase equipment and provide training for staff. This has encouraged pupils to take part more frequently in physical activity and to enhance their fitness and motor skills.
- The school has used additional funding successfully for disadvantaged pupils, as well as Year 7 'catch-up' funding, to provide extra support in communication and in reading. This has secured excellent progress for eligible pupils.
- The accommodation is outstanding. The new school decor, for example, minimises unwanted distractions of noise and colour and this contributes very well to the relaxed environment in which the pupils learn.
- The relatively new provision for older pupils aged from 14 to 19 has developed extremely well. Pupils make very good use of their communication, literacy and numeracy skills in a variety of practical tasks. They take part in work experience and are rapidly gaining credits and certification in appropriate work-related courses. Careers information and guidance are provided to help pupils gain knowledge of their options, and the skills needed for training and future employment.
- The school provides pupils with outstanding opportunities for their academic and physical development. The curriculum has a very positive impact on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and on their readiness to take their place in modern Britain.
- The school communicates effectively with parents who give the school their full support. Parents overwhelmingly feel the school values them as partners in their child's education. One parent commented, for instance, 'Strategies are clearly agreed for priorities and in dealing with particular issues. The school

gives us detailed information.’

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are very well informed. They have an excellent understanding of information on pupils’ progress, and how it compares with similar schools. Governors know about the quality of teaching in the school and check the management of teachers’ performance. They effectively oversee financial control including the salary arrangements for teachers. They maintain close oversight of additional government funding, and regularly check the impact on the pupils’ progress and well-being. Governors challenge school leaders very effectively. They take part in regular training, such as in aspects of child protection and safeguarding and in the use of information on pupils’ progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They show high levels of engagement in their learning and have excellent attitudes towards all activities in and out of the classroom. This is because the school tailors all their learning so well to their needs and abilities. This has a significant impact on their learning.
- Adults manage behaviour extremely effectively. There are detailed records on each pupil’s preferences, learning habits and likely causes of their anxiety or confusion. These records show significant decreases in challenging incidents as pupils settle into school and adults get to know what works best in helping them learn.
- Whenever a pupil becomes unhappy or anxious adults rigorously examine the causes for the behaviour and immediately adapt strategies to enable the pupil to relax and enjoy their experiences. The school trains adults very effectively in techniques to manage difficult situations with pupils. They have a deep understanding of each pupil’s needs and preferences, established through excellent communication with parents.
- The pupils are typically calm and relaxed. They have exceptionally good relationships with adults. Their trust in adults and their feelings of safety are evident in their concentration for relatively long periods and their co-operation in learning activities. Parents confirm that their children love school. Parents and staff are confident that the pupils behave as well as they can.
- Bullying is unknown in the school. Records show no incidents since the previous inspection. Pupils gradually learn through continual interaction and communication with adults how to take responsibility for their own conduct. Adults supervise pupils closely while allowing them as much independence as possible, and refer to carefully prepared individual behaviour plans. Adults provide excellent role models.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. High levels of supervision ensure the pupils’ safety. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are exemplary. The new school site is a very safe environment. Pupils feel safe and their above-average attendance reflects their feelings of security.
- The school teaches pupils very well how to behave and keep safe in different situations through methods such as ‘social stories’. Older pupils take part in travel training and make such good progress that they cope successfully and safely in their work experience, for instance in the local hospital.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Much of the teaching in all areas of the school is outstanding. This is a result of rigorous and supportive checks by senior staff and because all staff benefit from regular further training. This training focuses precisely on identified needs as a result of the careful monitoring of teachers’ performance.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils’ progress and this contributes very successfully to the outstanding achievement of all groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result of high expectations, those from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as the more able achieve very well. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the sixth form is outstanding. Every pupil has a tailored learning programme which challenges them to make the best progress that they can.
- Teachers maintain consistently detailed records of the small steps in understanding which pupils make. This enables them to build successfully on the pupils’ earlier learning and promotes their excellent progress.
- There is excellent teaching of communication through the use of visual symbols and other well-chosen techniques. The teaching of reading and writing is highly effective and curriculum planning reflects this. As

a result, pupils become familiar with the sounds and shapes of letters and words, and more-able pupils quickly move on to more advanced material. Sixth form students, for example, confidently read cards about the work of emergency services in the course of a game which effectively reinforced their literacy and social skills.

- Adults regularly check how well pupils are learning through observation and through well-chosen questions and use of visual symbols. They are extremely skilful and effective in adapting activities to ensure pupils understand their work and are making the best possible progress. This has a notable effect on the quality of the pupils' learning.
- Pupils are always made aware of exactly what they are to do next when they have finished their tasks. Adults make sure the pupils understand when they have done well and how they can improve their work.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The attainment of pupils remains low because of their significant learning disabilities. However, their progress is exceptionally good. A large majority of pupils achieve at levels higher than those expected nationally of pupils in similar schools. This proportion has risen consistently since the previous inspection.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress because of carefully adapted individual learning programmes and excellent teaching.
- Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress as a result of teaching which encourages them very effectively to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a variety of practical situations. It also builds on their communication and their personal and social development. These pupils have made very good progress in working towards nationally accredited qualifications.
- All pupils make excellent progress towards their challenging individual targets. They make significant progress in communication and in reading, writing and the use of numbers. In a primary lesson, for instance, pupils worked individually with adult support in sorting and counting shapes. Individual pupils worked at their own level in identifying the shapes and recording their appearance, and made very good progress.
- The pupils who benefit from additional funding make equally good progress because of well-judged support. By the time the pupils reach secondary age they make the same progress as other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress because of the school's strengths in teaching communication and literacy.
- The more-able pupils who transfer to local mainstream schools make outstanding progress. They join in mainstream lessons where possible and this successfully motivates them to do well and accelerates their progress. The school has been successful over several years in returning pupils to mainstream schools, where appropriate on a full-time basis, because of the outstanding progress they have made.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The children make excellent progress from their starting points in each area of learning and particularly in their communication and in their personal development. They quickly settle into school and they are very well prepared for the next stages in their learning.
- All the children achieve well including those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. Those for whom the school receives additional funding and the more able make sustained progress.
- Adults quickly get to know the children very well. They prepare carefully adapted individual programmes for them and the children experience a high level of individual support and supervision in a rich, imaginative environment.
- Teaching is consistently outstanding. Adults are extremely responsive to the needs of the children. Teachers regularly check on the children's achievements to ensure their outstanding progress. Teachers have high expectations of their learning.
- As a result, the children show interest and concentration. They are keen to join with adults in their learning and they quickly learn how to behave well.
- The school keeps children very safe. They come to school with smiles and settle without fuss. There are excellent partnerships with parents who value the extent to which they are involved in their children's

learning both at school and at home.

- The leadership and management of the early years provision are excellent. Children achieve outstandingly well because of excellent teaching, high levels of care and individual activities which effectively encourage the development of the children's skills, knowledge and understanding.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- There is outstanding teaching which builds on the school's focus on individual students' success. Teachers successfully show students how to apply their skills in practical situations such as in work-related activities. As a result, the new sixth form students are making excellent progress towards national qualifications.
- The curriculum is very well adapted to meet the students' needs. Students reinforce their basic skills in literacy and numeracy and transfer these to experiences in work-related learning, including work experience. Almost all the students will go on into the school's planned provision for older students.
- The students have excellent attitudes to their learning. They are very well motivated by their activities and they socialise more and more effectively with other pupils and with adults. Their behaviour is outstanding. Their attendance is well above average. Students are given very good advice to keep themselves safe.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form provision, including the small team of staff, are very good. As a result, adults work very effectively with individual students and ensure they continue to make excellent progress.

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	100378
Local authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	448126

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Walsh
Headteacher	Judith Ragan
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 March 2010
Telephone number	020 7384 2330
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