Russet House School

Autumn Close, Enfield, London, EN1 4JA

Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 because:

- The school was judged outstanding in the previous inspection and has maintained and improved still further on standards of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils with autism and adapt activities skilfully to help them overcome barriers to their learning.
- Almost every pupil sustains a very good rate of progress. The great majority achieve much better than expected nationally. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make rapid progress, particularly in their communication and social interaction skills.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are kept safe and given a high degree of individual attention and care. The pupils develop positive attitudes to adults and other children and their behaviour and attendance are excellent.
- The headteacher and her senior leaders, together with competent middle managers, very rigorously monitor and evaluate every aspect of the school's performance and strive continuously for improvement.
- The management of teachers' performance is extremely well organised and this has had a significant impact on rising standards of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors are very well informed about the pupils' progress and teaching standards and have made a strong contribution to the improvements made. They provide an excellent level of support and challenge to the school's leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons and parts of lessons, all of which were joint observations with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with staff, middle and senior leaders, and governors, and an inspector held a telephone conversation with a senior representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the recent school survey of the views of parents and carers and the 40 returned staff questionnaires as well as the few responses to the on-line parents' questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including self-evaluation and development planning. Inspectors scrutinised the records of pupils' progress and behaviour since the previous inspection as well as monitoring reports on the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The records of pupils' attendance were looked at, as well as documents and procedures relating to the safeguarding of the pupils.

Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jackie Blount	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The majority of pupils have additional learning difficulties. Almost a fifth of pupils are in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- A high proportion of pupils come from ethnic backgrounds other than White British, reflecting the make-up of the borough. The school's population is changing and numbers rising. A growing number of pupils come from African families who are sometimes new to the area and who are refugees or seeking asylum in England.
- A high proportion of pupils have English as an additional language.
- An above average number of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, given for pupils who are entitled to free school meals, who are in the care of the local authority or who are from service families. There are no pupils in the school from service families.
- The school provides an outreach and inclusion service for other schools in the borough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of home-school liaison in meeting the needs of pupils and families in a changing school population.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school is very low but, from these starting points, almost all pupils make rapid and sustained progress. The overwhelming majority achieve much better than is expected nationally of pupils in similar schools. The outstanding progress observed in the previous inspection has consistently been improved further. Pupils make rapid progress, irrespective of their particular disabilities or special educational needs.
- There are no differences in the performance of different groups, including those of African heritage and those of other ethnic backgrounds. The staff's expertise in teaching communication enables all pupils to make very good progress, including those new to the school with very limited English. Pupil premium funding has been appropriately used to fund an extra full-time speech therapist and this has helped ensure that eligible pupils do as well as their peers. They reach similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics.
- The school tracks the performance of every pupil carefully and teaching is adapted to their individual learning needs extremely effectively. Consequently their achievement is outstanding. The equal opportunities of children are at the heart of the school's work. There is no discrimination and every pupil has a very good opportunity to achieve to their full potential.
- Pupils make strong gains in communicating with staff and with each other, for example in learning to order and structure their vocabulary.
- Pupils make rapid progress in developing their communication and literacy skills because the school's detailed curriculum planning ensures that these skills are practised throughout the day in all aspects of learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make rapid progress, often from very low starting points, and this gives them a good start to their education. Older pupils continue this consistent progress through skilled and patient teaching.
- Pupils quickly learn to recognise and use symbols and then letters and words through the well-organised and monitored provision for teaching reading and writing. This helps open the door to learning in every subject in the curriculum and, consequently, pupils also make rapid progress across the curriculum. Their strong progress in numeracy is shown by growing confidence in matching objects and recognising numbers and, later, in counting, adding and subtracting.
- The pupils make excellent progress in their personal skills and this in turn aids the development of their communication skills. After a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the pupils learn to be tolerant of others, to take turns and to respect the other pupils and adults. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils thrive in a socially cohesive and supportive environment. They regularly reflect on the lives of others in assemblies and in personal, social and health education. The pupils play happily together and grow more confident in their use of language and this prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Standards have continued to rise since the previous inspection because of rigorously applied monitoring procedures. All of the teaching is at least good, with much that is outstanding. As a result, the pupils make excellent progress. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent because it is based on very clear assessment of children's needs and abilities and children receive a high level of support through very well planned strategies to improve their communication and independence skills.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' achievement. They know the children very well and plan in great detail so they may successfully take the next small learning step. Teachers maintain outstanding assessment records of pupils' progress and this enables them to adapt activities precisely to meet the needs of each child. The pupils find their work challenging but always within their reach. As a result, frustration is kept to a minimum, and pupils enjoy learning

and make rapid progress.

- Teachers manage their classrooms very effectively. Support assistants are well briefed in regular meetings. Pupils receive a very high level of individual tuition and support. Lessons proceed briskly and time is always built in at the end of lessons to discuss the work with the pupils, to praise effort and to make sure the pupils know how to take the next steps. Adults continually check the pupils' knowledge and understanding during lessons. This gives the pupils confidence to proceed and helps maintain their concentration.
- Teachers are very effective in teaching communication and the beginnings of literacy. This work is rightly seen as fundamental to the pupils' needs and every aspect of the day is structured to help pupils develop these skills. Adults are well trained in the use of symbol systems, matching words and pictures and in encouraging pupils to interact through the use of information and communication technology, such as interactive sensory screens. Adults are especially patient and well prepared in using very structured language with individual pupils, adapted clearly to their level of understanding of vocabulary and recognition of printed letters and words.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The pupils love coming to school. This is confirmed by their eager entry to school on arrival and their high levels of attendance. One parent commented, 'He can't wait to get on the minibus each morning.' The pupils have very good attitudes towards, and positive relationships with, adults and other children. They enjoy their learning, their behaviour is almost always very good and this contributes significantly to their progress.
- Parents, staff and pupils are positive about the pupils' behaviour. On most occasions, pupils settle well to learning. When a pupil is disturbed or confused by events, which may result in challenging behaviour, the staff deal calmly and consistently with the incident. This in turn leads to individuals making very good gains in their ability to manage their own behaviour. Parents have every confidence in the quality of the school's care and excellent management of behaviour.
- There have been no recent bullying or racial incidents. Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is, in its different forms, and confirm that the school is a happy and harmonious place. In assembly and in lessons, they are effectively taught to value and respect others.
- The pupils feel secure at school. Over time, they develop a firm understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Every child is well known to all staff and receives the utmost care and attention. Pupils feel valued and they respond by behaving as well as they know how.
- The school makes exemplary attempts to involve and support parents through home visits and through tailored training for parents in communication and in managing the behaviour of their children. The population of the school is changing rapidly and the school is aware that there are a few parents who need better support.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's experience and expertise and unswerving commitment to excellence over a long period have driven improvement. She has managed the development of a highly effective senior team and middle leaders who have a significant impact on school improvement. Staff wholeheartedly 'buy in' to the school's continual search for improvement and they share in planning the school's development.
- The school has an excellent track record of consistent improvement over several years. There is no complacency but a determination always to make things better. Standards of teaching and consequently the rate of pupils' progress continue to improve. There is an outstanding capacity to maintain this improvement**.**
- The school's self review procedures are exemplary. For instance, the school has reviewed its work with parents and found improvements are needed. Every teacher's work is reviewed

regularly in depth and, where further training or support is indicated, it is quickly provided. Performance management procedures are extremely robust and teachers' work is clearly linked to salary progression and increased responsibility.

- There has been extensive and on-going training in specific aspects of teaching pupils with autism and several members of staff are currently studying for higher degrees. The skills of teachers are well regarded by the local authority since teachers from other schools are encouraged to visit the school to improve their practice. The local authority provides a 'light touch' relationship with the school because of the confidence in the school's own self-monitoring, while providing support should the school request it.
- The curriculum is adapted precisely to meet the needs of each pupil. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum provides extremely well for the children's communication and early literacy needs as well as their numeracy and personal development. Older pupils have a balanced programme which emphasises communication and literacy across the curriculum and enables them to achieve very well. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well served by personal and social education, through the many trips and visitors to school and, not least, by the exciting overnight camping experience in the school grounds.
- The school is very highly regarded in the borough, not least through its excellent and very well organised outreach service, which supports many schools. The school maintains excellent relationships with parents and provides a high level of support. The school has prioritised further improvement in supporting new or harder to reach parents.
- Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are exceptionally well informed about pupils' progress, including school performance data, and the management of the performance of teachers. They effectively manage financial control, including the salary arrangements for teaching, and are fully involved in how good teaching is rewarded. They also know how any underperformance is tackled. They maintain very close supervision of pupil-premium funding and regularly check the impact on the pupils' progress and well-being. Governors are fully involved in the school's self-review, target setting and monitoring processes. They take part in regular training and, consequently, nominated members are well informed, for instance about health and safety matters and the safeguarding of the children.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	130958
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	403814

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dee Kushlick-Williams
Headteacher	Julie Foster
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 March 2010
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