

# Bents Green Secondary School

Ringinglow Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S11 7TB

**Inspection dates** 8–9 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 personal and life skills. This means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
- The majority of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is increasing rapidly.
- Teaching is usually consistently good; this has been secured since the last inspection. Sometimes it is outstanding. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
- Pupils apply themselves well to the high expectations set for them to ensure that their behaviour is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. This is because staff ensure that each pupil's individual needs are met very well.
- The sixth form is good. Students are well prepared for leaving school because arrangements for transition are very well organised.
- The leadership has high ambitions for what pupils can achieve. Senior leaders have effective, focused plans to ensure that everyone is now very clear about what part they play in improving pupils' achievement. All staff are helped to continuously improve their teaching and this is supporting continuous school improvement.
- The governing body is very well led. It has made sure that action has been taken swiftly to restore pupils' outcomes to good. It sets clear expectations and holds leaders and managers to account for the performance of the school, including the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the specific targets set for pupils are not challenging enough, especially for the most able.
- A few parents do not yet feel confident that their children are achieving well.
- The role of the middle leaders is not yet completely embedded to enable them to contribute fully to checking progress made by pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 part-lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and examined pupils' work in files and books.
- The inspectors took account of the school's procedures for safeguarding. They looked at the school development plan, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, curriculum and lesson planning, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers, and documents that track pupils' academic and personal progress.
- Meetings were held with leaders and staff, and a telephone call was made to a member of the local authority. A discussion was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of inspection questionnaires returned by 31 members of staff, three comments made by parents via telephone and two written responses from parents. There were 31 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents).
- A National Leader of Education, who is the headteacher of a nearby outstanding special school, was appointed to support the school in July 2013. She took up post as executive headteacher in May 2014.
- A second deputy headteacher was appointed in May 2014. Some new appointments to the middle leadership team have just been made.
- The attached residential provision has changed designation to become a children's home.

## Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Eaton	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- All pupils have autistic spectrum conditions. The majority of pupils also have moderate learning difficulties. An increasing minority of pupils have severe learning difficulties. A few pupils have additional complex needs.
- The majority of pupils are boys.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding in order to raise achievement further by ensuring that:
  - the specific targets set for pupils always build on assessments made so that they are always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able pupils
  - sharing the outstanding practice already available in the school
  - continuing to focus training for teachers on the learning needs of the growing numbers of pupils with more severe learning difficulties.
- Fully embed the role of the middle leaders so that they make a full contribution to checking and improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inform parents more fully of all that the school does so they can feel confident in the good work being done to improve achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils are working at levels lower than expected nationally when they join the school as a result of their disabilities and special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils make good progress. Compared to pupils nationally with similar starting points, the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress compares favourably with that found nationally, although their standards are still below national expectations when they leave the school.
- The vast majority of pupils make good progress in their personal development and life skills. This means that the majority of pupils are able to make good progress in English and mathematics because they are increasingly able to apply themselves well in lessons.
- Pupils' progress accelerates when they begin attending the school as a result of specialist arrangements in place to ensure that their school experience is as stress-free as it can be.
- Pupils' progress is notably swift in mathematics. This is because this subject has been well led over time.
- Progress in calculating and in number skills is a strength because staff communicate enthusiasm for this area of learning and pupils respond very well.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress because their complex needs are catered for very closely and arrangements for moving into new situations are very carefully organised. The opportunity to gain qualifications, follow work placements and practise life skills has a good impact on their achievement.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress because they are ambitious and know what qualifications they want to achieve in readiness for moving on to college. A few pupils are achieving close to broadly average attainment in mathematics. All pupils gain a range of appropriate qualifications.
- However, evidence from teachers' regular checks shows that occasionally pupils do not make as much progress as they should, especially the most able, because assessments made do not fully inform the specific targets set for pupils. As a result, the most able pupils, for example, do not always reach the levels they should in their work.
- A small minority of parents who responded to Parent View thought that their children did not make good progress. Inspectors agree that this was sometimes the case in the past, although not currently.
- Achievement in reading is good. This is as a result of the priority now given to literacy, daily reading and carefully targeted support.
- A close partnership with the attached children's home, contributes well to pupils' achievement because information is carefully shared between staff.
- Additional funding for pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are used to good effect to support eligible pupils' learning and progress. As a result, these pupils make at least good progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching has been secured since the last inspection. Sometimes, it is outstanding but this practice is not always shared with other staff. Teaching typically enables most pupils to make good progress in personal and life skills because staff are skilled in creating and maintaining classrooms which are orderly and calm.
- Lessons often include pupils applying their personal and social skills as well as their English and mathematics skills. As a result, pupils make good progress in other subjects such as food technology.
- Staff develop pupils' understanding through skilful questioning and by their different types of response. For example, sometimes pupils must respond very quickly to questions or instructions whereas, at other times, they think through what they have been asked before giving a

response. Pupils can look at photographs and diagrams via interactive technology to help them to understand what they are learning.

- The teaching of reading and literacy is good because individual learning needs are addressed well in tutor time.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to the achievement of pupils through good encouragement and support when working closely with individual pupils.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good because students apply skills in an increasingly wide range of adult situations. This prepares them well for when they leave school.
- Occasionally, targets set for the most able pupils do not challenge them sufficiently well. This is because the information gleaned from good assessments is not always used as the basis for setting expectations of what pupils are asked to achieve. As a result, some opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge are missed.
- The majority of parents, who responded on Parent View, agree that their children are taught well, although some would like even more homework to be set.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite. Most pupils are confident and speak with pride about the school. They try very hard to respond as well as they can to the advice and guidance given to them by the staff. As a result, pupils keep the school tidy, and behaviour at lunchtime, outdoors and in corridors is usually exemplary.
- Staff are skilled in maintaining a positive atmosphere in the school. This is because they ensure pupils are clear about their high expectations and, as such, pupils remain calm and stress-free. For example, pupils respond well to clear, unambiguous language and quiet voices.
- Extensive, carefully organised transition arrangements make a significant contribution to a few pupils who are supported to show remarkable gains in their capacity to move successfully into new situations such as college.
- Pupils understand well various issues about bullying. They say bullying is very rare and any problems are dealt with so it is not an issue. Pupils understand that the way some of their peers speak to each other could be considered as a problem but they know that this is not intentional.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe; they know this because they have many opportunities in personal, social and health education to understand about how to keep safe. At other times, pupils show they feel safe as a result of the warm relationships between staff and pupils.
- Students in the sixth form understand clearly what they must do when they learn out in the community. For example, they know that they must wait and look for traffic before crossing the road to destinations.
- Robust risk assessments are made to cover pupils when they are learning in technology rooms or when pupils go on trips or residential visits, for example to Boggle Hole.
- Attendance is average as pupils are keen to attend whenever they can. Rewards for good attendance and good behaviour include gaining a pass for the lift for a week which is highly prized.
- The large majority of parents who responded on Parent View agree that their children are happy and safe at the school.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The executive headteacher is a highly effective leader. She is persistent in her ambition for the school to return to its former excellence. She and the senior staff from her own school have had a considerable impact on school improvement. Since taking over as executive headteacher, the

pace of school improvement has been even more rapid. She is ably supported by the deputy headteachers. Staff have now regained their confidence and work well together as a team because they are now very clear about what is expected of them.

- The leadership of teaching is effective. It has included training to meet better the needs of pupils with more severe learning difficulties. Leaders know that they need to develop further the work of the school in line with changes in the pupil population.
- Procedures to check the quality of teaching are in place. However, the headteacher knows that the role of the middle leaders is not yet sufficiently developed to enable them to have a sharp focus on, and contribute more to, the progress made by pupils when they check the quality of teaching and learning. There is a suitable link between teachers' performance and their progression along the pay scales.
- The school's system for keeping an eye on how well pupils are doing is now meticulous. This ensures that any pupil at risk of underachieving is identified and support is put in place to remove any barriers to learning. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every pupil has an equal opportunity.
- Leaders ensure that additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are used to good effect by providing a wide range of additional resources and opportunities for pupils eligible for this support. For example, by providing a tablet computer for eligible individuals. It is clear that the funding is making a positive difference.
- Leadership of the sixth form is successful. Appropriate emphasis is given to progress in English and mathematics, and to preparing older pupils for the next stage of their education through extensive advice and guidance.
- The school has a very accurate view of its own performance. Improvement plans are very effective because they are detailed, linked to training and reviewed carefully. They reflect the expectations and strong, clear vision of the leaders.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For instance, pupils are able to reflect during musical experiences such as a trip to the opera and they enjoy kind, warm relationships.
- The school's range of subjects and other activities meet the needs of the pupils increasingly well. Learning is enriched by special focus days, visits and residential experiences, and gives priority to meeting the health, communication and learning needs of the pupils.
- Partnerships are well developed. For example, work with the attached children's home makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement and well-being. Close working with local mainstream schools extends the opportunities pupils have to learn at a higher level alongside their mainstream peers.
- The local authority knows the school well and targets support effectively. The local authority has supported the school well through a period of staff changes since the last inspection. This included organising the support of the National Leader of Education over a year ago. Advice to the governors from recognised experts has been very effective in driving school improvement.
- Partnership with parents is good overall, although some parents are not fully aware of the increasingly good work of the school and of the good progress being made in pupils' achievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body contributes very well to the leadership of the school. The right balance of parents and experts from a variety of backgrounds are led by an experienced, very effective Chair. They hold school leaders stringently to account for what happens in the school and how its work is carried out. They have contributed to the securing of a robust leadership team and ensured that the welfare of the staff has been a priority throughout the staffing difficulties. Members manage the budget effectively and make sure that all safeguarding procedures are thorough and meet requirements. They are clear about how additional funds such as pupil premium have made an impact on individual pupils who are eligible for this support. They have played an invaluable part in maintaining standards and morale through the re-configuration of the structure of senior staff. Governors are fully included in information about how well teachers are performing, and know about the quality of teaching and how this links

to any increases in salary.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107169
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	442189

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	163
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	52
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ruth Tiddy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judith Smith (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 236 3545
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