

Frank Wise School

Hornbeam Close, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 9RL

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

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.

- Parents recognise the 'warm, welcoming feel' to this school. Pupils, including those in the sixth form and early years, make outstanding progress. Their achievement is exceptional and they are very well prepared for the next stages of learning.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have continued to maintain and improve outstanding provision. They have extended the range of work experiences and opportunities for independent living.
- Teaching is outstanding. Relevant and engaging activities, developed from detailed programmes of study, are precisely focused on pupils' levels of learning and interests. This ensures they are highly motivated.
- Early years provision is excellent. Children respond fully to high expectations and challenging interactions with staff.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Independence and self-management are strongly prioritised, improving students' confidence and competence in many areas of learning.
- Behaviour is excellent. Pupils show courtesy and respect for others. Procedures to ensure safety are thorough and effective. Consequently, pupils feel very safe and parents are highly confident their children are well cared for.
- The leadership of the headteacher, who is fully supported by senior staff, is very effective. Staff at all levels constantly challenge themselves to improve.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and steadfastly hold leaders to account.
- As a result, leaders, managers and governors ensure that the school, including teaching and achievement, continues to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, and two registration sessions. Two lessons were observed with senior staff. Break time and lunch arrangements were seen.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and governors, and a telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to individual pupils read to them. Reading included the use of text or symbols.
- The school’s work was observed. Inspectors examined a range of documents, including those concerning keeping pupils safe, assessments of pupils’ progress, records of behaviour and attendance, and the schools plans to improve further.
- Inspectors analysed 52 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Sixteen responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View were analysed and the school’s own parental surveys were seen. A letter from a parent was taken into account and an inspector spoke to parents informally as they collected their children after school.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jenny Boyd, Team inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are being assessed. The local authority is beginning its phased process of transferring from statements of special educational needs to Education, Health and Care Plans and a few pupils are being assessed under these new arrangements.
- Children start school full time in the assessment Nursery from the age of two, although some start in older class groups.
- The school classes are grouped largely according to age so that pupils with different levels of learning difficulty are educated together.
- The school was designated a specialist school in cognition and learning in 2007.
- Two thirds of the pupils are boys.
- Most pupils are White British, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds being a little lower than seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- Year 7 pupils receive literacy and numeracy catch-up funding.
- The school receives sports funding for primary-aged pupils.
- Some 3% of pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- The school uses no alternative providers. Each week pupils in each class group spend several hours in a mainstream school or have pupils from a mainstream school visit their group.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Widen and deepen links with other provision to extend further the range of educational opportunities for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- A drive to excel runs through the school's work so that staff motivation and morale are very high. One member of staff's comment, endorsed by inspectors, is that the school is 'organised, considered, supportive and effective'.
- Widely dispersed leadership and management ensure that staff at all levels thrive on their responsibilities, including those leading subjects and areas of study. Tightly focused, relevant staff training, such as the regular curriculum workshops, and thorough systems of managing staff performance improve teaching and achievement.
- Progress, attendance and behaviour are accurately monitored and evaluated and action taken if there are any concerns.
- Highly developed programmes of study support the school's consistent approaches, greatly enhancing pupils' learning and behaviour. British values are strongly promoted by the school's own values, assemblies, religious education and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Many opportunities to raise pupils' self-esteem through praise, warm relationships, and celebrating achievements enhance spiritual development. Moral and social development is accelerated by high expectations and staff being very good role models. Cultural development is enhanced by the extensive opportunities for residential trips and by celebrations such as a Chinese New Year assembly. All this is assisted by the school's inclusion of all pupils and its strong links with mainstream schools, parents, and the local community.
- There is no evidence of discrimination. Pupils have equal opportunities to succeed, assisted by close monitoring of achievement and intervention if any pupil is at risk of falling behind.
- Older pupils, including sixth formers, receive effective guidance about work and study, enabling more informed decisions about the future.
- The school actively involves most parents, providing advice and support and thorough detailed annual reviews. Parents appreciate the 'tailor made programmes' and the 'real partnership' with the school.
- The local authority has facilitated the school's development, working with the school and others to enhance local provision, such as the Teaching Schools Alliance, providing training to other schools. The school is keen to further develop its successful partnerships with other schools and colleges to offer an even broader range of opportunities to all pupils.
- Safeguarding meets requirements through very well-judged systems and practice. 'Moving and positioning' plans and medical issues are exceptionally well managed. The school's support for especially vulnerable pupils is tenacious and perceptive.
- Pupil premium money is effectively used for specialist resources and extra staffing. These contribute to the individualised approach of the whole school. Carefully used Year 7 catch-up funding provides extra training and staff time to support pupils' transition into secondary education. Sports funding is effectively deployed for equipment for pupils with motor difficulties and staff training for example in teaching gymnastics. The impact of all funding is fully evaluated.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors ensure that staff and other resources are very effectively deployed. They have a strong understanding of how well pupils achieve, drawing on a wide range of assessment information and visits to the school. Governors have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching through the visits they make and the reports they examine. They are vigilant in the way they oversee pupils' safety. Drawing on external advice, governors conscientiously manage the performance of the headteacher. They oversee the management of staff performance, ensuring that high performance is rewarded and any underperformance promptly addressed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils respond fully to the school's very positive climate for learning, trusting staff deeply. They are proud of their school and care for it well. Parents and staff rightly consider that behaviour is excellent.
- In lessons and at break times, pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Lunchtimes have a relaxed and happy atmosphere.
- Pupils respond positively to the consistent management of behaviour. They are proud of the celebrations

of their achievements in assemblies and in displays of their work. They are sensitive to the needs of others, as when asking other pupils what they would like to eat during snack time and waiting as necessary for a response.

- Pupils show high levels of respect and consideration for others, helping each other wherever they can.
- Because pupils enjoy their learning and coming to school, this has a powerful positive effect on their achievement.
- Pupils start lessons ready to learn so time is fully used. They try their best in lessons and concentrate hard.
- As necessary, very effective behaviour plans are put in place and used consistently throughout the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Staff are vigilant about pupils' safety, and parents express confidence in their child being safe at school.
- Pupils feel secure and can offer examples of keeping safe in different circumstances. They recognise how learning to swim can help water safety. Pupils can describe why one has to be careful when using the internet and social networking sites.
- Safety is enhanced by the high priority the school places on encouraging pupils' communication and independence so that they are increasingly confident and skilled in conveying their views and feelings.
- According to their different levels of understanding, pupils recognise what bullying is and they know that there are different kinds of bullying. They state that it is uncommon in school but occasionally there is name calling. Pupils are clear that such incidents are dealt with effectively by staff.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching leads to pupils' excellent achievement in a wide range of areas, including literacy and pre-literacy and mathematics and pre-number skills. Teachers have very high aspirations for learning and pupils' behaviour reflected in meticulous, individually focused planning.
- Teachers have a deep knowledge of child development and of the areas of learning that they teach, which combine to ensure that activities are highly relevant and engaging. In a lesson for older pupils about wearing suitable clothing for an interview, pupils enjoyed recognising and choosing real items of clothing, writing about suitable dress, and choosing pictures of clothing. Pupils were able to explain their choices: 'I picked these shoes because they are shiny.'
- Time is used effectively. Lessons start on time and work is highly focused, capturing pupils' attention and interest. In a personal, social and health education lesson for younger primary pupils, time was fully used as pupils were absorbed in practising bedtime routines such as face washing, cleaning teeth and dressing.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and therapists work closely together, as in a Key Stage 2 music lesson when staff supported and encouraged a range of challenging activities. Pupils' choices were made verbally, through signing or through fixing eye gaze on a 'yes' or 'no' symbol. Some pupils recognised a crotchet notation and tapped out the appropriate rhythm.
- Ongoing assessment through the use of questions and recording small steps of progress or consolidated learning is deeply rooted in school practice. Records of progress are meticulously maintained, for example pictures and detailed written records of progress made in the hydrotherapy pool. Thorough annotation of pupils' work and the value placed on what pupils do consistently help raise pupils' self-esteem.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed with considerable skill. When challenging behaviour does occasionally occur, it is calmly managed so that learning resumes quickly.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- From their different starting points, pupils make excellent progress and achieve very well in many areas including in developing language and thinking skills, and in numeracy and pre-numeracy work. Computer skills and communication are strongly developed.
- Pupils' high levels of achievement is reflected consistently in the school's own assessments, pupils' work, observations of lessons, and the views of pupils, parents and staff. Assessment levels are checked within the school and externally to ensure that they are accurately judged.
- Individual pupils and the different groups, for example boys and girls, pupils with different levels of learning difficulty, and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, all make very rapid progress.

- Because of pupils' profound and severe learning difficulties, disadvantaged pupils, and other pupils in the school attain at levels well below those of all pupils in other schools nationally. Disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress at the same rate as other pupils in the school. This is because of the school's very individualised approaches and targeted strategies respond to their specific needs.
- Comparatively, the most able pupils are challenged by the aspirational targets they are expected to reach and by precisely pitched work.
- Pupils who are able to read, including those who use symbols, do so regularly. They enjoy reading and using varied strategies such as breaking sounds down into smaller parts.
- The skills and knowledge pupils gain are learned in practical contexts and applied across the school's programmes. For example, younger pupils' communication was skilfully encouraged in a design and technology lesson involving making a puppet theatre.
- Transitions, for example from one age group to another in the school and the transfer to the sixth form, are carefully planned. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education or in life. The way staff share an understanding of pupils' levels of learning is very helpful in this process. Wide-ranging opportunities for work experience, residential trips including visits abroad, and constant opportunities to develop independence greatly contribute to learning and development.
- Older pupils achieve well in examinations under the Accredited Qualifications Alliance (AQA) by the time they are 16. No pupils are entered early for any GCSEs.
- Multi-disciplinary work between teaching staff and therapists and their close collaboration in the structures in the classroom greatly enhance pupils' development and learning.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Highly effective leadership and management at all levels ensure staff expectations are high and children respond fully. Consequently, from their different starting points, individual children and groups of children make excellent progress and achieve very well. They are thoroughly prepared to start Year 1.
- Through the use of whole-school systems of assessment, staff accurately identify and tailor provision precisely to the children's needs. This accurate assessment enables teachers to know what children need to do next.
- Very detailed planning is targeted on the individual child. Highly focused teaching reflects teachers' awareness of children's targets for their learning.
- Nursery children discussing the weather used a fan to help them grasp the nature of windy weather. One child requested 'more windy please'. As pupils engaged fully in play and exploration, staff acted as excellent models for using and developing language.
- Teaching staff, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and others work closely together, especially when setting targets for learning and development. Intense levels of engagement between staff and children lead to children's high levels of enjoyment and achievement.
- Children are safe within the provision's well-considered routines. Behaviour is consistently very well managed, enabling children to stay focused on their tasks during lessons.
- Staff training to show parents how to sign to their children is just one example of the close and effective partnership with parents.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Strong leadership and management, setting high aspirations, have sustained outstanding teaching which has, in turn, led to students' excellent progress. Individuals and groups of students achieve very well.
- Highly developed, distinctive sixth form programmes motivate students and enable effective learning. Great efforts are made to ensure the fullest participation. Students learned a lot when questioning a visiting politician as part of a programme on democracy. Thorough preparation enables students to express their views, using film clips and taped comments and reading.
- Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage through highly focused guidance and relevant activities such as enterprise work, residential opportunities, and work experience in shops and companies. For example, different groups of students were captivated by a lesson where they had to organise activities to run a film club, run a sandwich business, organise coffee mornings, or develop a card printing enterprise. This lesson was part of an excellent series of enterprise activities organised to help prepare students for life in the world of work.

- Students achieve very well in their thoughtfully chosen examinations, for example City and Guilds Entry Level, as well as Levels 1 and 2. Last year all leavers followed customised provision, mainly going on to further education.
- Staff adeptly provide numerous opportunities for students to demonstrate their independence and take responsibility for their own behaviour. This helps nurture students' excellent attitudes to learning and their outstanding behaviour. Students feel safe and have a growing understanding of keeping safe and of the consequences of their behaviour.
- Students contribute considerably to the whole school. They are excellent role models for younger pupils, and raise funds through their enterprise schemes to buy cards for other pupils to give to parents.

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	123332
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	448154

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	106
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Howard
Headteacher	Sean O’Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 January 2010
Telephone number	01295 263520
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