

Round Oak School and Support Service

Brittain Lane, Warwick, CV34 6DX

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement has improved since the last inspection. Students now make good progress in all subjects and in their personal development and life skills.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well because they spend an increasing amount of time developing and applying their skills in adult situations. They are successfully prepared for the transition to the next stage in their education or training.
- The headteacher and senior staff lead the school well. They robustly monitor standards and ensure that teaching continues to improve.
- The governing body have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They challenge and support the school well.
- As a result of excellent relationships between all staff and students, the behaviour and safety of students are outstanding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable students to make exceptional progress.
- The new procedures to gather information about students' attainment and progress are good but they cannot yet fully show how students make progress over longer periods of time.
- The role of subject and other leaders has not yet developed to the stage where they can provide effective focused monitoring of students' progress and teachers' performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, the majority of which were observed jointly with members of the leadership team. Inspectors also heard students read.
- An inspector visited the off-site provision at the National Grid, observed the students at work and met with a company representative.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative and a small group of students.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, student progress, attendance and behaviour, performance management, governor minutes and external advisory visits. Work in students' books was also reviewed.
- There were insufficient responses to Parent View (the on-line questionnaire for parents) but inspectors took account of the school's own survey. The views expressed by the 48 staff questionnaires returned were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Lynda Walker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter McKenzie	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Taylor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Round Oak School is a special school that provides for students with a broad range of needs, including moderate, severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Nearly a quarter of the students have autistic spectrum disorders and a smaller proportion of students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Most students are White British and others are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra funding from the government for students looked after by the local authority and those known to be entitled to free school meals, is higher than in most schools.
- The school is a specialist sports college and works with many partners locally.
- The school manages a support service which is commissioned by a number of mainstream schools to offer support and guidance for disabled students and those with special educational needs who are on their roll. The service is also contracted to provide education for students attending a mental health facility but none of these students are on the roll of Round Oak.
- The school has formed an innovative partnership with the National Grid which has resulted in a small number of the sixth form students being given a year's internship.
- The school also has an off-site learning facility at Holloway Farm which provides an extensive range of practical, vocational learning opportunities to students across the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the use of information about the progress of different groups and individuals by:
 - providing training and support for staff to establish a common understanding of the link between students' targets and their day-to-day learning
 - ensuring that all targets for students' learning are sufficiently challenging and that their progress towards them is recorded systematically.
- Strengthen the roles and responsibilities of subject and other leaders to enable them to make a more effective contribution to monitoring both student progress and the standards of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Although the overall attainment of students remains low because of their learning difficulties, their rate of learning has improved consistently since the previous inspection.
- Students' results in art and information and communication technology are outstanding with several gaining higher grade GCSE passes.
- The flexibility of the curriculum allows students to contribute to decisions about accreditation and activities are tailored to their interests. The recently expanded range of accreditation matches different levels of students' ability. The students currently in Years 10 and 11 are on track to achieve GCSEs and Entry Level passes in English and mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Most students have very weak literacy and numeracy skills when they join Round Oak School. The Year 7 catch-up funding provided by the government has been used effectively to ensure that there is a very clear focus on providing all students with opportunities to practise these skills in all activities. The impact of this was seen in a food technology lesson where students were prompted to apply their spelling knowledge when trying to spell the plural of 'leaf' and 'knife'.
- Comparison of data on achievement of different cohorts and groups shows that boys and girls in all age groups, from all backgrounds and heritage make similar progress.
- Students receiving support through the pupil premium make similarly good progress to the others. This is because the extra funding is used effectively to provide additional staff, therapies and equal access to enrichment activities. Overall there is no significant difference between the achievement of eligible students and the others.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form. They spend an increasing amount of time developing and applying their skills in adult situations and at Holloway Farm. This prepares them extremely well for their transition into the next stage of their education or employment. The excellent partnership with the National Grid is an example of outstanding practice. Students there talked confidently about their roles and responsibilities within the company, and they have responded to these in an outstanding fashion.
- The school has maintained its specialism as a sports college and, as a result, students' achievement in this area is good. Students told the inspectors that 'You had to do what you were told' in Year 7 and 8 but once you got to Year 9 they could choose which sport they wanted to do. In addition to the traditional sports and games, they are able to choose from a wide range of activities including fly fishing, canoeing, dance, rock climbing and ice hockey.
- The majority of parents responding to the school's own questionnaire were positive and pleased with the progress their child had made since being at the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has shown consistent improvement over time and since the previous inspection. This is because of well-established and rigorous monitoring procedures, accompanied by well-focused supportive mentoring and further training. Teaching is now almost always good and occasionally outstanding. As a result, the rate of progress made in the last year by students,

including those in receipt of the pupil premium, has increased.

- Lessons generally are well planned. In the best examples work is well matched to the students' different ability levels, so that students do not all do the same task regardless of ability. However, this is not always the case. Teaching assistants are not always given enough guidance about how they can adjust or adapt tasks in order to help all students to make good progress.
- In the best lessons, teachers and other adults are very skilled in their questioning to check what the students already know and can do. They skilfully adapt their teaching where necessary to improve learning.
- Students enjoy coming to school and take full advantage of the options available to them as they pass through the school. They enjoy caring and positive relationships with staff who help them to develop self-confidence and resilience.
- Verbal and written feedback to students is encouraging and constructive. The marking of work is helpful and students spoken to during the inspection were very clear about what they needed to do to improve further.
- In the sixth form, students are taught well and gain qualifications on courses that introduce them to the world of work and prepare them for further study.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students have excellent attitudes to their work. The warmth and positive regard with which all staff treat the students enables them to offer advice and guidance that is listened to and acted upon. Classrooms are almost always quiet, industrious places of learning. The students concentrate on their work and they try their best at all times and are proud of their achievements.
- Students' achievement in their personal development and life skills is central to the school's aim. As students progress through the school, they build up an ever-increasing understanding of how to manage their own behaviour, make choices and confidently express their needs and wishes.
- The confident way in which the students at the National Grid applied themselves to their tasks, together with the way in which they were able to talk about how they needed to be on time and keep to deadlines, was extremely impressive. Similarly, students spoken to about their work on the farm stressed the need to work as a team and to follow safety rules.
- Some students find the behaviour of a few other students irritating, but think staff deal effectively with any problems. Occasional incidents of misbehaviour do occur, often linked to students' communication and learning difficulties. Staff manage these skilfully to ensure they do not interfere with the learning of other students.
- Students say that they feel safe in school and that bullying rarely happens. They told the inspector that there was always someone they could go to if there were any difficulties. They indicated their confidence that any problems would be sorted out quickly. Students feel that adults care about them a great deal and this is a view that is endorsed by parents. The care and support that students receive from adults is of the highest quality.
- Students learn to keep themselves safe at all times. The school has ensured that students understand how to use the internet safely and, as a result, cyber-bullying is not an issue.

Students treat each other as equals and incidents of racism are very rare.

- By the time they leave school, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They get to know how other people live and work through the extensive range of trips, visits, sporting events and extra-curricular activities. Through the curriculum they learn about other people their cultures and religions. They develop self-esteem and self-confidence to gain qualifications and move on successfully to the next stages in their lives.

The leadership and management are good

- The school's leadership team and governing body provide strong leadership that, since the last inspection, has brought significant improvements in students' progress and the quality of teaching. These developments illustrate the capacity of the school to sustain improvement in the future. Even so, there is no complacency in the leadership but a desire to improve further so that students get an even better experience.
- The headteacher has established a further tier of responsible staff to be accountable for specific school improvement strategies but the skills of these leaders are not yet fully developed for them to be able to support other staff effectively.
- The stimulating curriculum is effectively matched to the needs of all groups of learners. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form the curriculum is 'destination driven'. The very good support and advice the students receive from a careers advisor helps to inform their option choices and enables all students to fully engage and enjoy their learning. The school's effective partnership with Holloway Farm and The National Grid supports students' progress to further education and the world of work well.
- New systems for collecting and checking information on students' progress enable leaders to see how most of the students are performing in comparison with others. It also helps them to target additional help and support where it is needed. However, not all staff are confident in recording and analysing this information or in using it effectively to help inform their lesson planning.
- School leaders use resources well. The effective monitoring of the school budget ensures that additional funds, such as the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, are used effectively to support learning.
- There are secure procedures in place for the performance management of teachers and other staff. These, accompanied by regular staff training, have had a significant impact on standards and are effectively linked to teachers' salary progression.
- The local authority knows the school well and has given tailored support to match its needs. This has been effective in supporting improvements since the last inspection.
- Leaders and governors tackle discrimination and promote equality comprehensively. Close working relationships with a range of health, medical, therapy and social care agencies help break down barriers to learning for the students.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable, well organised and has a wide range of skills. It asks

challenging questions of the headteacher and senior staff.

- Governors know the school’s strengths and weaknesses, and fully support the leadership team’s drive for improvement. Governors know about the targets set for teachers and what the school is doing to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. Governors also undertake a full review of the headteacher’s performance every year.
- The governing body ensures that the school meets statutory requirements and that the school finances are well managed.
- The use of pupil premium funding and the impact it is having on the achievements of students is evaluated and kept under review. As a result, the governing body is able to hold the school to account for any differences in the progress of students.

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	125806
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	426908

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Rose
Headteacher	Jane Naylor
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2012
Telephone number	01926 423311
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