

Fountaindale School

Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 5BA

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The principal, vice-principal and governors are resolute in their determination for each child to succeed. Their vision and actions are inspirational and have been the key to improving the school to outstanding.
- Senior and middle leaders are passionate in driving through improvements so that every pupil experiences only the highest-quality learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly to ensure that each pupil works hard and enjoys learning.
- Teachers use questions skilfully to reinforce and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. They encourage and support communication and their expectations for each child's progress are high.
- The innovative environment and stimulating curriculum catch the imagination and promote a love of learning. Leaders have an ambitious plan to develop the outdoor environment to further extend learning experiences.
- Governance is strong and challenges leaders to reflect on and refine their actions. Governors are hugely proud of the school and the pupils and carry out their responsibilities with determination and a strong sense of purpose.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very strong throughout the school. Lessons are expertly planned to respond to the needs of every learner.
- Highly effective teaching and strong leadership in the early years ensures that children make outstanding progress within the stimulating and nurturing environment.
- Despite their complex needs and the many barriers pupils face, their outcomes at all key stages are outstanding. Pupils develop their communication skills and enjoy reading and discussing whole-class stories.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and during social times. They are very polite and show huge respect and tolerance for others.
- Pupils feel well cared for and safe in school. The strong safeguarding culture evident across the school is supported by effective partnerships with other agencies and leaders' knowledge of every pupil.
- Pupils are happy at school and are supported to develop independence and resilience. They are given many opportunities to prepare them for the next steps they will take when they leave the school and reach adulthood.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend learning opportunities for all pupils, developing their knowledge and skills of the outdoor world and meeting the full range of complex and sensory needs by:
 - developing an imaginative outdoor learning environment
 - extending the sensory curriculum from within the indoor environment to the outdoors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal and vice-principal are determined that each pupil will succeed at Fountaindale. They are excellent role models and promote high expectations. Together with the leadership team they provide high-quality learning for all within a highly stimulating, caring and nurturing environment.
- All staff are passionate about learning and teaching. They are regularly involved in discussion about the curriculum, activities and the progress of pupils. They ensure that the detailed knowledge they have about each pupil is used to inform the pupil's individual learning plan. Teachers work together closely as a team to support and challenge each other in driving progress and further improving the quality of teaching.
- Since the last inspection, the principal and vice-principal have extended the responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning within the three school phases known as pre-formal, semi-formal and formal, to include their assistants and middle leaders. This frequent and accurate monitoring enables them to know precisely how each pupil is progressing and enables them to quickly adjust the level of support when needed.
- Performance management is closely linked to pupils' progress and to the school's plans for improvement. Leaders use performance management sharply to make sure that outstanding outcomes are consistently delivered.
- Based on their research and knowledge of their pupils' complex needs, leaders have developed an innovative curriculum which is underpinned by a highly effective assessment system. Despite the physical and learning barriers they face, the curriculum quickly engages pupils' interests and helps them to develop and master new skills.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school very well. They are accurate in their evaluation of the school's work and are continually looking for ways to improve further. Teachers, leaders and teaching support staff work with schools both locally and nationally to share good practice and refine their own skills.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and the provision for these and all pupils is tracked and monitored meticulously. Current disadvantaged pupils, including those most able, make strong progress in all subjects and year groups.
- The sport funding premium is used successfully to involve pupils in a wide range of sports and activities. Pupils enjoy activities such as swimming and ice skating. The funding has also been used effectively to deploy coaches for multi-skills teaching which has helped to develop the skills of staff in teaching physical education (PE) to pupils with a wide range of physical difficulties. The very small number of pupils who are eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding benefit from the additional support they are given.
- Staff morale is very high and all staff are passionate about supporting each and every child to achieve their very best. Staff greatly value the opportunities for professional development given to them by leaders and reflect upon their own and school practice as a result in a constant bid for improvement. Recently qualified teachers appreciate

the support they receive at the outset of their teaching career.

- Leaders ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is delivered through the curriculum and that pupils are taught to be tolerant, respectful young people. They experience a wide range of different cultures and religions, such as during their recent 'Holi' day which was shared with their families. Pupils show genuine respect towards other people.
- British values are taught well and embedded across the school. Pupils recognise the value of being able to contribute to decision-making processes through the very active school council and the pupil voice is very strong at Fountaindale. Pupils have designed and agreed, through a public vote, their school flag with their own school symbol, 'Fredice'. They have improved the choices on offer for school lunch through consultation with pupils, staff and the school kitchen.

Governance of the school

- The school benefits from strong governance.
- Governors are a skilled, reflective, forward-thinking body of people who have the best interests of pupils and staff at the heart of their work.
- Governors know the strengths of the school and are aware of areas for further improvement.
- They provide challenge and support to the principal and leadership team. They readily ask probing questions and hold leaders to account. They are knowledgeable about keeping pupils safe, including when pupils are online. They are aware of their statutory duties and proactive in monitoring efficiency of policy and practice and value for money.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff are highly trained, knowledgeable and vigilant about safeguarding policies, procedures and practice. Pupils feel safe in school; parents and staff agree. Understanding the needs of each pupil and applying appropriate support is a high priority for the school and this ensures that all pupils feel welcome, cared for and respected.
- The school engages very well with parents and parents are confident that their children are safe in school. Even when their children have significant health issues, parents are happy that they will be well looked after and that school will contact them to discuss any concerns.
- Governors and leaders are uncompromising in providing a safe environment in which pupils can flourish.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Without exception pupils are fully engaged in their learning and say they enjoy lessons. 'School is fun', was a typical comment from pupils. Pupils excitedly showed photographs of themselves playing alongside the Philharmonic Orchestra and described their visit to London. They were also keen to show themselves drumming when visitors came to school on their 'Holi' day recently.
- Leaders are visionary in the stimulating learning environment they have created, enabling pupils to learn through sensory experience. Regardless of the physical, emotional and learning challenges faced by pupils due to their special educational needs and disabilities, teaching captures their interest and imagination. As a result, learning is highly effective.
- Challenge is a strong feature of learning. Each pupil is given work which stretches them from their prior knowledge and the work they have completed in previous lessons. Learning is repeated and reinforced when needed in response to their individual learning plan, with further support provided as required.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge is demonstrated in their high-quality questioning. Consequently, pupils develop depth of knowledge and mastery of skills which contribute to their outstanding outcomes. Learning is deepened and pupils' communication and verbal reasoning skills are enhanced as teachers challenge pupils to 'show me' or 'tell me why this is'.
- Teaching assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning across the school. They have a detailed knowledge and understanding of each pupil they work with and help to plan next steps on their learning plans. They know when to support and when to challenge pupils to be independent. Their high-quality work is evident across the school.
- The high expectations of staff are reflected in pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They thrive within the bright engaging environments which are focused on effective learning. Staff are aware that further development to include outdoor learning would extend the range of opportunity and activities for learning.
- Despite the constraints and restrictions presented by their disability or medical condition, pupils are taught to become independent and resilient learners. Pupils persevere when they need help in their learning and there is a culture of 'can do and keep trying' across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and take great pride in their learning. They are keen to show and explain their work.
- Adults and pupils promote an ethos of mutual respect and care. Pupils are very

considerate to each other and will often help each other without being asked. Inspectors saw many examples of cooperation in lessons and during social times.

- Pupils speak very positively about the environment in school. They move around the school in an orderly manner, are polite and helpful with peers and adults and behave appropriately at all times.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and feel they are well looked after. This view is very positively reinforced by staff and parents. Pupils say instances of bullying are very rare in school but they are confident about who to go to and that it would be dealt with by staff.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and make good choices. For example, a school council representative asked that pupils should be allowed to have crisps and chocolate at lunchtime. After discussion with staff, he understood why this would not be allowed as part of the whole-school adoption of the national Healthy Schools programme and was able to explain to other pupils.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online and personally as a result of the high-quality teaching they receive. They recognise the dangers of putting personal details online or wearing school uniform in a photograph posted, which would identify their school. School have worked with parents on online safety and governors are keenly aware of their responsibilities and duties in this area.
- Pupils excel when given opportunities to be responsible; for example, when collecting a register from the office to take back to the classroom. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to work with younger pupils, sharing books and stories. School council pupils take their role very seriously in contributing to developments in school through discussion and consultation on issues they have identified.
- Pupils are prepared well to become responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society and develop their understanding of diversity. They experience a wide range of visits and visitors and enjoy special days when their families are invited too. Older pupils are prepared for transition to college and are given opportunities for work experience.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils really value their learning and keenly showed inspectors their work. They are very positive about their lessons and what they are learning.
- In lessons and around the school, pupils listen to each other and are extremely well behaved. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent, without exception, even when a pupil has a significant health difficulty which makes concentration a problem.
- There is a buzz of learning and a keen sense of purpose all around the school as pupils engage in a variety of individual or group activities carefully designed to reinforce and extend their skills.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. They are proud of their responsibilities and look forward to helping others. Pupils who achieved their bronze Duke of Edinburgh award recognised the wide range of activities which

challenged their thinking and promoted teamwork as well as their independence.

- Pupils are tolerant and embrace the views of others. They greeted inspectors warmly and welcomed them to their lessons and activities. They showed their work with pride. They recognise that adults in the school are role models and are keen to meet the high expectations, for example by achieving merits or gaining an award in assembly.
- Overwhelmingly, parents stated that their child is happy at school and keen to attend. When pupils are absent it is always due to health issues. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and work closely with families, providing support when it is needed.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Outcomes for the majority of pupils at Fountaindale are consistently outstanding in all areas of the curriculum, including reading, writing and mathematics. Despite their very low starting points and complex needs, many pupils make rapid progress. Intensive and highly effective support enables pupils to develop in confidence and skills.
- Information provided by the school for current learners shows that the vast majority of pupils are making sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics and across the wider curriculum. Many are making rapid progress, especially with regard to communication. Work seen in books, and in discussion with pupils, support this view.
- A very small number of pupils with significant health conditions have some gaps in their learning and their progress is slowed due to absence, hospitalisation or frequent medical appointments. When this occurs, school staff keep a very close watch on progress and provide good support to both the pupil and their family, enabling targets to be met upon their return.
- A strong focus of the school's work is communication and pupils make outstanding progress in this area. A wide range of communication options are available to pupils, and these are used specifically to meet their individual needs. This gives all pupils the opportunity to interact with each other and with staff.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and there are no significant differences in the progress they make and that made by their peers.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of books available in their book corners and the stories teachers read to them. They successfully build their reading skills and use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words. They are keen to talk about the stories they know and to describe the associated activities.
- Older pupils achieve a wide range of external accreditation and follow courses appropriate to their level of understanding and interests. These include entry level, functional skills qualifications and GCSE examinations.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children enter the early years provision with skills and knowledge below that which is typical for their age. Whatever their individual starting points, all children make very good progress, with the majority making outstanding progress.
- High-quality teaching, from teachers and teaching assistants, is responsive to the

children's individual needs and always focuses on the next steps for learning. Teachers' assessments are accurate, checked for accuracy and based on high-quality observations. Parents and staff contribute to assessments and targets.

- The sensory learning environments are highly stimulating and promote children's enjoyment and their engagement in learning. Carefully planned, themed activities support children to move forward in their learning. A strong focus on developing independence encourages children to initiate their own activities and sustain higher levels of attention.
- Children demonstrate very positive behaviour and cooperate well with others. They are very respectful of adults and respond positively to guidance and support.
- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. Leaders have a clear understanding of priorities based on thorough evaluation. They constantly seek to further improve provision and outcomes for all children and are highly ambitious for all. Leaders monitor progress and the curriculum and measure the impact of training on children's progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and, as a result, disadvantaged children grow in confidence and achieve a good level of development in communication, reading and mathematics from their starting points.
- Safeguarding is effective and the children know who to talk to if they are unhappy or need help.
- Parents are very positive about the provision. Communication between home and school is excellent and parents value the support given to them by school staff. One stated: 'I would totally recommend the school, my child loves it.'

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The majority of learners make outstanding progress from their starting points. They work towards a range of external accreditation and qualifications. This includes GCSE for the higher-attaining pupils, entry level certificates and functional skills qualifications. Staff support learners to strive for their intended grades through small step targets in their individual learning plans.
- All learners who left school last year gained accreditation. The school is continually reviewing the courses available to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils in the school.
- A very small number of learners make less progress due to periods of absence from school when they are ill. Through close monitoring and working with parents, staff are able to support learners to catch up on work missed and provide the challenge and intervention needed for them to achieve their intended grade.
- In deciding on which courses to follow, staff encourage learners to consider their interests and think about their future when they leave Fountaindale at transition meetings. Careers guidance and work experience opportunities are available. For example, pupils have considered how to make applications for a job, provide information about themselves and have experienced the interview process. This improves their confidence and self-esteem.

- All leavers in July 2016 progressed to college. Leaders track destinations over time and previous leavers have come back to school once in employment, to share their experiences with learners.
- Learners are well prepared for their next steps after Fountaindale. For example, in a lesson, learners who were compiling their records of achievement were keen to explain these to an inspector. They showed a good level of knowledge and understanding of the purpose of the record of achievement and how it could support them to gain a place at college and later in seeking employment.
- Their learning environment is purposeful, with high expectations for each learner. All are encouraged to reach a good level of independence in relation to their physical, emotional and learning difficulties.
- Monitoring and evaluation by leaders is very effective and ensures that an appropriate range of courses are available, together with a good level of challenge and support for each learner to achieve their goal. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. One commented: 'I wish my child could stay here.'

School details

Unique reference number	122947
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10012498

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Knowles
Principal	Mark Dengel
Telephone number	01623 792671
Website	www.fountaindale.notts.sch.uk
Email address	office@fountaindale.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–14 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Fountaindale is an average-sized special school which provides education for pupils with physical disabilities, complex medical conditions and associated learning difficulties, including sensory impairment and profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The school serves the whole of Nottinghamshire and has some pupils on roll from other

local authorities.

- The school is commissioned by the local authority to operate the Physical Disability Support Service and provides advice, support and training to other schools. It also operates the local authority's Health Related Education Team, which provides a hospital and home education service for children across the authority who are unable to attend school due to health reasons.
- The school has a residence, which offers overnight stays for pupils for one or two nights a week. The residential inspection took place at the same time as this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The early years provision comprises a learning environment for Nursery and Reception children.
- The school runs an after-school club to promote independence jointly with the residence.
- The school provides training and shares skills with schools locally and nationally. As part of this work, the school regularly shares activities and resources with staff and children who visit Fountaindale.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. All observations and learning walks were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, pupils' work was scrutinised in lessons.
- The inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- The inspectors met with pupils, both formally and informally, to listen to their views. This included a meeting with the school council and scrutiny of their meeting notes.
- Meetings were held with the principal, vice principal, other leaders, teachers, support staff and members of the Physical Disability Support Service and the Health Related Education Team. An inspector also met with members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with the education support adviser from the local authority.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation that covered information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan; minutes of meetings; records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding of pupils. Scrutiny of the website was undertaken.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. An inspector held telephone conversations with parents, and the school's own evaluations from recent parent questionnaires were considered. The inspectors also took account of the 39 responses to a questionnaire for staff. Pupils were not able to access the online questionnaire for pupils due to their complex needs. However, they did share their views confidently with inspectors in lessons and generally when moving around the school.

Inspection team

Lynda Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Emly

Ofsted Inspector

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