

# Glyne Gap School

School Place, Hastings Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2PU

**Inspection dates** 30 June–1 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b> <b>1</b>
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.

- Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and assistant headteachers, leaders have successfully created a culture in which the progress of every individual pupil takes absolute priority. As a result, all staff have an uncompromising focus on the quality of learning for all pupils.
- Despite the number of significant changes at the academy, leaders have successfully maintained, and often improved, the quality of provision offered for the varied needs of pupils.
- Governors are very skilled and knowledgeable. They work extremely well with academy leaders to make sound strategic decisions to maintain and improve the effectiveness of the academy.
- All staff promote the well-being, health and safety of pupils in all that they do. Pupils are very well cared for. Safeguarding arrangements are very effective.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and show very high levels of engagement in their learning. Their behaviour contributes to the strong sense of community because they work and play well together.
- Teaching is highly effective. Teachers have very high expectations. They know their pupils extremely well and plan creative lessons that capture pupils' enthusiasm. This successfully builds on what they can already do.
- Other adults, such as teaching assistants, are highly skilled and used effectively to support pupils' progress.
- Teaching actively promotes equality of opportunity.
- Pupils make substantial progress from their starting points given the complexity of their needs.
- Provision in the early years is outstanding. The environment is very well organised to meet the needs of the specific children. Children make a very good start in the nursery and are well prepared by the time they move into the main academy.
- The sixth form provision, situated on the Bexhill College campus, is as effective as the rest of the academy. Students are extremely well catered for and so are thoroughly prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons across all departments, including the sixth form, all jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the academy, at snack and 'leisure' time, and during lessons. They analysed records of pupils' achievement, talked with a number of pupils from across the academy and observed a student council meeting in the sixth form.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also spoke to a representative from the local authority and an adviser to the governing body on the telephone.
- Inspectors looked closely at academy documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, the academy's analysis of how well it is doing, the academy improvement plan, and data and tracking information about pupils' achievement. Inspectors also reviewed the academy's behaviour logs.
- Inspectors took account of 15 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and discussions with two parents during their visit.

## Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clementina Olufunke Aina

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Glyne Gap School is a special academy for pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties. The school converted to become a stand-alone academy in April 2013. When its predecessor school, which had the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The academy has three sites. The main site caters for pupils from Year R to Year 11. Children in Reception attend full time. Children of pre-school age attend the Early Years Nursery, run by Bexhill College, part time. The provision is shared with some children who go on to attend the neighbouring Pebsham Academy. Sixth form students are based in a faculty at Bexhill College.
- All pupils from Reception through to the sixth form are supported by a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a much smaller proportion speak English as an additional language. There are approximately twice as many boys as girls.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who qualify for free school meals or are in the care of the local authority) is above average and represents nearly half of the total cohort.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2013 after previously being assistant headteacher with responsibility for the sixth form.

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

- Continue to strengthen the academy's systems for measuring pupils' progress in light of the changes to the National Curriculum and assessment without levels.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteachers, has successfully created a culture of high expectations, shared responsibility and uncompromising focus on learning. Leaders share a dynamic vision for the future of the academy. This is understood and supported by all staff who consistently strive to improve. As a result, provision is excellent and pupils' achievement outstanding. The academy is therefore promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination highly effectively.
- The leadership of teaching is extremely strong. The headteacher has restructured the leadership team to ensure that each department at the academy has an effective leader who oversees, evaluates and improves learning. As a result, academy leaders have a very accurate view of how well pupils are learning and why. Their plans are sharply focused on improving the quality of provision further. For example, the head of faculty has ensured that students leave the sixth form able to make informed choices about their next steps. Leaders have maintained, and often improved, the quality of teaching and learning in every department.
- Leaders' checks on teachers' performance are well organised and effective. Leaders have developed their own 'teachers' standards' which make very clear what is expected of staff. As a result, teachers and other staff are clear about what they need to do to improve and are held rigorously to account for the progress of their pupils. Leaders evaluate the progress staff are making against their targets regularly. Targets are adapted effectively to ensure they continue to meet the changing needs of individuals.
- The learning culture established by academy leaders benefits staff as well as pupils. For example, teaching assistants who aspire to teach are trained, supported and challenged to make this a reality. This means that all staff are highly committed and possess the skills needed to carry out their roles effectively. Staff reflect carefully on their practice and strive to improve how they help pupils to make as much progress as possible.
- Middle leaders make a significant contribution to leadership and management. They have clearly defined roles, for example leading learning for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, or overseeing dual placements for pupils. This means they rightly focus their time and energy on their areas of responsibility. They are fully involved in monitoring teaching and learning and use resources effectively, such as the skilled communication team, to bring about improvements. They lead useful training to improve the quality of teaching of other staff. For example, they often mentor and support those who are newer to their careers who quickly develop the specialist skills they need.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that rightly prioritises the specific needs of the pupils. The primary focus on pupils' personal development and communication is very effective. Pupils are given challenging targets in these areas. Teachers ensure that every part of the academy day is utilised to allow pupils to learn and apply the skills needed to meet these targets. For example, the academy day has defined 'snack' times. Pupils are expected to work as a team to prepare an area, share food and tidy up after themselves. During these activities, staff effectively promote independence, communication and collaborative teamwork. This means pupils are always thoroughly prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training.
- British values are promoted well, because pupils are encouraged to show respect for each other and to treat others equally. They are expected to form and maintain positive relationships. The active student council helps pupils understand the democratic process. Pupils take advantage of the opportunities to influence and contribute to the way the academy works.
- Very good use is made of the extensive resources available at the academy to enhance pupils' experiences as well as meet their complex needs. There is a very wide range of opportunities offered to pupils. For example, pupils are taken climbing, horse riding and on regular trips to add interest to topics and broaden their experiences.
- The sport premium funding is used extremely well. Leaders have extended the number of clubs available to pupils, such as judo and cricket, and employed a specialist sports coach to improve the quality of physical education lessons. These lessons are a good example of leaders' commitment to equal opportunities, because adjustments are made to allow all pupils to participate effectively. The grant has also been used to access sports facilities at other schools to broaden the opportunities that pupils are given.
- The pupil premium grant has been used creatively and appropriately for the benefit of eligible pupils at the academy. Leaders have rightly focused on using the money to improve and broaden the opportunities for pupils and their families. For example, they financially supported family visits linked to the curriculum that would not otherwise have been possible.
- Leaders seek and make very good use of external support. Following the conversion to academy status,

for example, leaders rightly took the decision to stay within the local authority advisory programme. At all levels, leaders look for external verification about the judgements they make about the academy's effectiveness. This has helped ensure that evaluations remain sharp, focused and accurate. The local authority rightly holds the academy in high esteem. The academy's resources, such as its leaders, are regularly commissioned to support the work of other schools. There are numerous ways that the excellent practices of the academy have been used as beacons of outstanding practice, such as the criteria teachers use to assess pupils' achievement.

- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements at the academy meet statutory requirements and are well organised and effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is very effective. Governors know the academy well and carry out their role diligently. They make strategic decisions that allow them to be more effective, particularly when holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching and learning. For example, during the process of converting to an academy, they rightly employed an external adviser to help them understand how to judge the quality of learning when analysing data. Governors ask challenging questions of leaders about how provision is monitored and improved. This has helped them to develop a very precise understanding of the academy and its effectiveness, including the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They rightly hold senior leaders and the staff in high regard.
  - Governors have well-established routines and systems for monitoring the effectiveness of leaders' use of resources. They are fully aware of and appropriately involved in overseeing the relationship between teachers' performance and pay. They have also ensured that funds, such as the pupil premium grant, have been used effectively for the pupils for whom it is intended.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are happy and behave exceptionally well. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and a strong desire to promote well-being, and respect pupils' dignity. Staff work tirelessly to make the curriculum interesting and relevant. Pupils are engaged and enthusiastic at all times and, consequently, develop a love of learning. They demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their learning in all subjects.
- Pupils make a positive contribution to lessons and to the experience of others at the academy. This is because their behaviour reflects the professional and positive relationships of staff at the academy. Pupils welcome visitors and are keen to introduce themselves because of the high priority that has been given to help them build and maintain meaningful relationships. This is also reflected in how well pupils share play and leisure time together. For example, two pupils worked collaboratively so that they could take it in turns to be pushed on a basket swing.
- Leaders are effective in improving pupils' behaviour over time. Some pupils have highly challenging behaviour because of their sensory and communication needs. Leaders follow clear systems and processes to monitor and review what may be triggering unwanted behaviour. There are clear systems and processes that leaders follow to monitor and review what may be triggering unwanted behaviour. Analysis is then used to plan a multi-disciplinary approach to improving the provision for pupils, if and when it is needed. As a result, pupils who find regulating their own behaviour a challenge often make rapid improvements in their behaviour, which are sustained over time.
- There are no exclusions at the academy.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding because leaders place the well-being, health and safety of pupils at the centre of all of the work that they do. Pupils feel safe and recognise that staff look after them very well.
- Staff have individual plans to care for pupils and, if necessary, support their behaviour. There are rigorous risk assessments to ensure that the environment is appropriate for all pupils, including those who have more complex needs. Leaders also ensure that staff are deployed to utilise their specific skills and ensure that all pupils, including those with complex medical needs, are very well looked after.
- Pupils show a strong understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Their continuing focus on developing pupils' independence means that pupils are constantly reminded of how to behave and what to do to keep themselves safe, including when using technology.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the academy and they believe their children are very well cared

for and kept safe.

- Safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. Leaders work very closely with other services, such as those in social care, to ensure their work to promote pupils' well-being is effective. They are uncompromising in securing the right outcomes for their students. There are appropriate policies and procedures for checking staff when they are appointed. Child protection training is regular and relevant and so staff are very clear about their responsibilities when it comes to keeping pupils safe.
- Attendance is below average. This is because of the large proportion of pupils who have significant medical needs, some of which are life-limiting. Leaders have strong processes for analysing attendance of pupils, which they use to ensure pupils are appropriately supported in their learning if they have to be absent from school.

### The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching at the academy is highly effective. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils extremely well and are skilled at meeting their individual needs. This means lessons meet the needs of all groups of pupils, and the more able are appropriately challenged. As a result, pupils' progress is rapid and sustained.
- Teachers' skilled use of assessment in a range of contexts ensures they have a thorough insight into the specific needs of pupils. This means they plan lessons that capture the interest and enthusiasm of pupils effectively. Teachers also make use of assessment effectively in lessons to adapt what they are doing to maximise pupils' learning at all times.
- Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils at all times. They use opportunities afforded through the organisation of the curriculum to plan creative activities that will challenge pupils at all times of the day. This means lessons are engaging and stimulating, and provide excellent opportunities to promote independence, communication and teamwork.
- The teaching of literacy and reading is very effective. The curriculum is rightly designed to give as much opportunity for pupils to communicate as possible. Pupils are encouraged to read for a range of purposes and in a number of contexts. More-able pupils are taught to use a number of strategies, including phonics (the link between letters and their sounds), to blend unknown words and read well-known stories independently. As a result, pupils often make significant gains in their reading skills in spite of their profound needs.
- The teaching of mathematics is also effective at the academy. Pupils are given work with the appropriate level of challenge for their ability. For example, in a mathematics lesson seen in the junior department, pupils were solving calculation problems. Through careful questioning and the use of appropriate resources, pupils made excellent gains in their understanding of number and how to solve problems. They were encouraged to work independently throughout the session and expected to communicate fully in their discussions with staff and other pupils.

### The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils enter the academy working at levels significantly lower than would be expected for their age because of their profound needs. Consequently, pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage is below average. However, as seen in lessons and in their 'zig-zag' learning journals, pupils make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points, particularly in their communication and personal development.
- Leaders at the academy track pupils' progress using a range of measures. This allows leaders to analyse precisely the rate of progress pupils are making and where extra attention is needed to ensure they meet their full potential. Current progress information demonstrates that the proportions making expected progress, and the proportions exceeding expected progress, are much higher than national figures.
- When leaders analyse the progress of pupils with their teachers, they effectively identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. When this is the case, staff come together to consider a multi-disciplinary approach so that pupils continue to make the desired progress. This has helped ensure that pupils make substantial gains in their learning.
- The learning of groups is equally strong in all departments of the academy. This is because all pupils are treated as individuals and receive an individualised curriculum to meet their needs. Funds are used effectively to enhance pupils' learning experiences. This, with the attention to detail given to evaluating all pupils' progress, means there is equality of opportunity and all pupils make at least good and, more often, outstanding progress.

- Disadvantaged pupils make at least the same progress as their peers in the academy, and sometimes better. Hence they also attain similar levels as their peers in the academy. Leaders' rigorous analysis shows that the proportions making expected progress and the proportions making better than expected progress are both much higher than the national proportions.
- Higher-attaining pupils make exceptional progress. The well-designed curriculum, teachers' careful planning and the individual targets pupils are working towards all ensure that more-able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons and in all departments. For example, in a lesson observed in the sixth form, a teaching assistant skilfully worked with two students on a food technology lesson. A more-able student was asked to work with a less-able student to prepare and make chocolate rice-crispy cakes. The teacher carefully facilitated the collaboration between the students so that they were encouraged to communicate and solve problems together. This was particularly challenging for the more-able student because he had to work even harder to communicate effectively with his peer. The engagement of the activity and the careful guidance of the teaching assistant ensured that he made significant gains in his communication, independence and team-building skills.
- By the time students leave the sixth form, not only have they made exceptional progress from their starting points, but they are also very well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

### The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children in the early years make consistently high rates of progress. Children share their provision with some who will attend a mainstream primary school that shares the same site. Teachers use the opportunities this affords to develop children's independence effectively and understanding of what is expected when they are learning. This ensures they are well prepared for learning by the time they move to the main academy.
- The stimulating environment is very well organised to meet the increasingly complex needs of children who attend. Sessions are planned carefully to make the best use of the resources that are available. Teachers know the children very well and ensure that lessons engage children of all abilities. Every opportunity is used to promote children's independence and improve their communication skills. Children enjoy coming to the nursery and show excellent attitudes to the work they are asked to do, which is challenging. Children behave exceptionally well. All children, including those from the mainstream school, work and play well together.
- Staff make very good use of a range of assessment that is undertaken during sessions and over time. They use what they learn to ensure lessons capture the interest and imagination of children effectively. Other adults make a useful and valuable contribution to all sessions because they are skilled in supporting learning and also know the children well. As a result, lessons help children to build on what they know and can already do.
- The leadership of the early years is excellent because leaders evaluate the quality of learning with the same level of scrutiny as in other parts of the academy. Children's well-being, health and safety are effectively protected because of the rigour of leaders' policy and practice. They are highly ambitious for the children whose education they oversee and all those who work in the early years share their high expectations. They ensure that children are safe because they follow the academy's policies rigorously.
- Leaders have also developed highly effective strategies to engage with parents. Whenever possible they use creative and innovative ways to help support families to assist in supporting each child's development. Parents rightly value the quality of provision on offer for their children.

### The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Leadership of the sixth form is highly effective. All staff are highly ambitious for the students. The high standards at the faculty have been maintained, and in several ways improved, since the conversion to an academy. As a result, all students make very good progress and often do exceptionally well.
- Provision in the sixth form is as effective as in the rest of the academy. This is because the curriculum is built on the same key principles. Leaders have ensured that students are very well prepared for their transition into the faculty and ensure that students' individual needs are very well catered for. This means they continue to make substantial gains in their learning.
- Teaching in the sixth form is of a very high standard. This is because staff have been supported to develop the precise skills needed to support learning for the students they teach. Teachers use a range of

creative methods to engage and inspire the students. They ensure that students feel and are safe. As a result, students enjoy lessons and make exceptional progress from their starting points, particularly given their level of needs.

- As in the main academy, all groups of pupils make rapid and sustained progress. More-able students receive appropriate challenge and, when possible, they are given the opportunity to access lessons at Bexhill College. For example, one student accessed advanced-level mathematics lessons.
- Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Leaders work closely with the transition team from the local authority to ensure a smooth change from child to adult social care. The different services work cooperatively to help students live an independent and fulfilling life. For example, one student who has chosen to live in his own flat is being supported to do this. Faculty staff have worked hard to deliver a curriculum that will give him the skills to make this move a success.
- Leaders ensure that students receive useful and varied work experiences and career advice when this is appropriate. More-able students are given a range of opportunities to try their skills in placements that match their interests and abilities. This allows them to make informed choices about what they would like to do as they move on from the academy.
- Students enjoy learning at the faculty, behave well and attend regularly. This is because the curriculum is personalised and built around their needs and interests. One of the ways in which they promote British values is through the democratically formed active student council, which enables students to make a positive contribution to the running of the faculty. Students have made suggestions about how the faculty can be improved, such as linking work experiences to individuals' interests. They also ensure that the views of all who attend the faculty are considered. They have introduced for themselves a message box where students can share their views.

## 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>	139521
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	449946

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>	Academy alternative provision converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<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>	125
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Claire Cordell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kirsty Prawanna
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
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