

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Glyne Gap School

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

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Inspection dates:

10 and 11 December 2024

## **Outcome**

Glyne Gap School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Glyne Gap School start their day joyfully. Every pupil is welcomed warmly and greeted by name. Parents and carers and school staff, including transport staff, work well together to ensure pupils transition positively into the school building. Pupils' independence is encouraged. For example, some pupils move independently to their individual classes, while others show their supporting adult the way to go.

An atmosphere of positivity pervades the school. Pupils and staff are cheerful, friendly and respectful of one another. Skilled staff support pupils effectively to manage their behaviour and emotions. This ensures that pupils learn well. Pupils' sense of safety and trust in staff is shown through smiles and laughter as well as through positive engagement with learning tasks. Every pupil is known and loved.

Ambition for pupils' is high. Leaders, staff and parents agree that the school's core purpose is to enable pupils to live happy, purposeful and fulfilled lives now and into their futures. Daily learning successfully supports preparation for next steps. Over a period of years, pupils work towards 'super-goals', such as toileting independently. When achieved, these are widely celebrated and new goals are set.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The needs of pupils at Glyne Gap School vary extensively. Many pupils have additional medical, sensory or physical needs or autism spectrum conditions. Consequently, leaders have designed a unique, carefully sequenced curriculum to meet this range of needs effectively. The curriculum is designed to enable pupils to secure and develop essential

skills for learning and for life. This is personalised for each pupil. Alongside this, pupils experience a wider curriculum which ensures they develop and apply basic skills to a range of experiences inside and outside school, for example being able to communicate their like or dislike of an experience.

Staff are highly trained. They have expert subject knowledge, particularly relating to communication. Makaton, picture exchange systems, communication books, now and next boards, electronic devices (buttons and talkers) and the spoken word are all part of the school's 'total communication' strategy. Communication is seen as a right and recognised as pivotal to a happy and fulfilled life. Communication strategies are deeply embedded across the school and curriculum subject areas.

Teachers check for knowledge as pupils move through steps of learning. Staff adjust activities to ensure that understanding is being developed. For many pupils, practice is needed to acquire new skills and knowledge. Staff know pupils well and choose motivating activities to encourage pupils to rehearse and reinforce their learning. For example, older pupils are excited to practise their communication skills to order drinks when visiting a café.

Pupils enjoy learning to read and write. Staff are well trained. They teach the phonics programme expertly. Pupils read books accurately matched to the sounds they know. They practise reading aloud frequently. Across the school, all pupils benefit from engaging with stories and texts. In Nursery, children are calm and settled when sharing stories with an adult. Older pupils show increasing focus and participation when engaging with sensory stories.

Pupils' progress, across the curriculum, including in communication, functional literacy, phonics and early reading, is reviewed routinely. Staff use this information to adapt learning activities and to set new individual targets. Pupil portfolios known as 'zig-zag books' illustrate pupils' learning and independence over time.

There is rigorous oversight of pupils' welfare and attendance. Pupils who struggle to transition into school or who have complex medical needs are supported on an individual basis. The school works successfully with families, health, social care and local authority partners to maximise pupils' attendance. Overall, pupils attend school well.

Pupils are supported exceptionally well for life beyond school. Right from the start, the school's curriculum has next steps and adulthood in mind. Every aspect of the school day, including lunchtime and leisure time, focuses on maximising pupils' independence. Pupils are supported well to find personal interests.

Staff and parents are positive about their experiences of the school. Parents speak of care, 'transformational' teaching and leadership and strong partnership working. Staff feel well informed and supported by leaders. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Glyne Gap School holds a deep sense of moral purpose. The school is reflective, continually challenges itself, and ambitions are high. School leaders and governors make

decisions that are in the best interests of the pupils. Parents agree that the school has a 'heart that is determined to make every child matter and excel'.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and

pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139521
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341740
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	121
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sylvia Lamb
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kirsty Prawanna
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.glynegap.org">www.glynegap.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Glyne Gap School is a special academy for pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional medical, sensory or physical needs or autism spectrum conditions.
- The school is located on three different sites. The main site caters for pupils from Reception Year to Year 11. The nursery provision is co-located with Early Years Nursery, operated by Bexhill College. The school's sixth form 'college' provision is located a short distance away.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and three assistant headteachers. The lead inspector met, in person, with the chair of governors and one other governor and held remote meetings with the safeguarding governor and the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: communication, interaction and reading across the school and the curriculum for pupils working on the engagement model. For each group of subjects, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, engaged with pupils, spoke to staff about pupils' learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

## Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz McIntosh	Ofsted Inspector

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