

Glendene School and Community Arts College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114346
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378846
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2012
Lead inspector	Ann Muxworthy

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	173
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Prescott
Headteacher	Eric Baker
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
School address	Crawlaw Road Easington Colliery Peterlee SR8 3LP
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy
Allan Lacey
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons, taught by 18 different teachers, and also carried out a 'learning walk'. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, pupils and a headteacher from a partnership school. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at policies, minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, external reports and records of pupils' progress. They analysed the 88 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Glendene School and Community Arts College is a larger than average sized special school. The school caters for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is a growing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and some pupils have additional sensory, physical disabilities or present challenging behaviours. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils attend from across the county of Durham. Most pupils are White British and a high proportion are known to be eligible for free school meals. There is a very small percentage who speak English as an additional language. The school has attained specialist school status in Arts and is a Young Enterprise Centre of Excellence. It holds the Investors in People award and has Healthy School status. The school is about to open a new extension to its building, which will provide additional classrooms, a sports area and visual arts facilities.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has improved well in the last three years but is not outstanding because assessment is sometimes inconsistent and because it is too early to see the impact of the new curriculum on pupils' even better achievement.
- Pupils' achievement across the school is good. The sixth form is good. Pupils build on their prior learning well and benefit from good-quality teaching during their time in school.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe and valuing others, through the diligent modelling of care and respect from staff.
- Teaching is good across the school. The staff team works exceptionally well together. Pupils greatly enjoy their lessons because they are interested and have lots of fun in their learning. Pupils achieve well because teachers and teaching assistants have a secure knowledge and understanding of their individual needs. However, although assessment is thorough and accurate, occasionally in some lessons it is not well enough focused on the immediate next steps in learning.
- The experienced headteacher, new leadership team and governing body have a shared vision and tangible sense of common purpose. Their self-evaluation, leadership of teaching and learning and management of performance are good. They strive successfully to raise achievement for all pupils by making continuous improvements within teaching and the curriculum, and by sharing existing expertise among staff and partner schools. The good curriculum underpins good teaching and promotes positive outcomes for pupils. The school has a good focus on systematically evaluating practice and setting priorities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure assessment of learning is consistent across the school and captures small steps of progress for all learners.

- Build on existing curricular strengths by ensuring that the new curriculum meets the aspirations, creativity and learning needs of all pupils and provides accreditation and the skills they will need for their futures.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The large majority of parents and carers feel their children are making good progress. One parent spoke for many with the comment, 'My child has always been given the opportunity to reach his full potential and his needs have always been met.' The inspection findings agree that pupils are making good progress. This is seen in the consistently good progress pupils make in their lessons when measured against their individual starting points, which are low in relation to age-related expectations. Pupils show enjoyment in their learning, and their good level of engagement in lessons and response to challenge improves their learning. The small number of more-able pupils with less-complex needs gain success in Entry Level and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards.

Those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress when compared to similar pupils nationally. The school's high expectations ensure the more-able pupils meet their challenging targets.

Assessment information and pupils' targets are used effectively to provide individually-focused support with the result that pupils with communication difficulties make good progress in developing their skills in speaking and listening. By the time pupils leave Year 2 and Year 6 they have made good progress in reading although standards are below those expected of pupils of a similar age. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language thrive in equal measure to all other pupils and clearly benefit from a learning environment that is supported by staff trained in British Sign Language. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress as do those students leaving the sixth form.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good and secures pupils' good progress and learning. The excellent relationships with teaching staff motivate pupils to learn. Support staff make consistently strong contributions to teaching and learning. For example, they provide valuable support to the whole-school use of British Sign Language and sensory learning. In good lessons, teachers apply their specialist knowledge and skills well to inspire, challenge and plan for pupils to achieve their best. Skilled questioning and modelling promote pupils' understanding of what is being taught and what they have remembered. However, in a few lessons, teachers' assessment of pupils is less well developed to capture small steps in learning and inform future lesson planning.

The curriculum is good. Specialist status in the arts provides real, creative and rewarding experiences that contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is not complacent and is seeking to maximise curricular strengths by including more opportunities for creative learning and by ensuring all pupils develop the skills they

need for the future. The strong emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics contributes well to pupils' good achievement. Literacy across the curriculum is a strength and supported effectively by drama and sign language to make it accessible to pupils with complex learning needs. Constant quality interactions assist in the development of language and communication skills and understanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the sixth form, pupils are supported well when they transfer to colleges and access the East Durham Partnership and Shaw Trust for work-related learning and employability courses. A range of specialist programmes and therapies support pupils' physical well-being and sensory needs well.

The good promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in pupils' responsible attitudes to learning and their good cooperation across year groups. For example, secondary age pupils were observed excitingly preparing a story they would dramatise for a primary age class on the 'Three Little Pigs'. Many opportunities for role play and the use of communication skills and imagination support their understanding well. One parent captured this by saying, 'I am delighted in a short space of time about the positive changes in my son's communication, behaviour and overall development.' This sums up the parents' and carers' view that teaching is good, a view with which inspectors concur.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers strongly agree that their children feel happy and safe in school and inspectors found this to be the case. The school has sustained a highly positive learning environment that promotes respect and consideration for others. Pupils behave well because they are happy, friendly and caring towards each other and staff. They enjoy lessons and get involved enthusiastically in many other activities which develop their confidence, independence and social skills. This is seen in their successful 'Singing and Signing Choir' and contributions to the new building as representatives at the steelworks and brickworks in Northumberland and Durham. Attendance is above the national average for special schools and is improving. Pupils are keen to get to their lessons on time.

Instances of bullying in any form are extremely rare and lessons in personal and social education ensure pupils are aware of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe. A typical parental comment was, 'We have nothing but praise for Glendene School and staff. It can be hard to trust a school when a child has additional needs but Glendene gives us peace.' Pupils say they are safe in school and this is seen in the trust they have of staff and the understanding they have gained from the first aid course.

Leadership and management

The experienced headteacher is confident in his vision for school improvement and is focused on driving through and securing nothing less than excellent provision for the school. The new leadership team is supporting this vision well. The school uses self-evaluation well to improve its performance and to engage and communicate with stakeholders. This is evident in the recent review of the curriculum which has led to changes that aim to build on the strong expertise in the arts and provide further creativity and clear pathways to accreditation and skills for the future. The new building will support the curricular priorities and provide high-quality provision for arts and sport.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and of pupils' progress are good and are effective in identifying priorities for improving achievement. For example, data analysis

identified that pupils progress well in English in Key Stage 2, but progress in this subject slows in Key Stage 3. The school, therefore, provided specialist English lessons to improve performance.

The curriculum is good and supports good achievement. The strong focus on professional development has ensured that the staff are highly skilled in supporting the communication needs of the pupils with British Sign Language across the school. There are effective partnership links which support memorable work-experience placements, such as Houghall Agricultural College.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's priorities and members are hugely supportive of the vision for school development. There is a good range of skills and expertise and the governing body fulfils its duties well in holding the school to account. This is evident in the strong commitment to developing the curriculum and in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The governing body and senior leaders promote pupils' well-being and equality of opportunity effectively. The governing body has welcomed the partnerships that have given greater opportunities for pupils to socialise and work in other settings and sees this as essential in ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of their community. The school animation and arts projects and opportunities to meet visitors from Zambia provide experiences that support pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents and carers are appreciative of the work of the school and comments like, 'I have always found the staff to be helpful and supportive to my son as well as giving him the best education possible' are typical. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection and, therefore, has good capacity to sustain this improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Glendene School and Community Arts College, Peterlee, SR8 3LP

Thank you so much for being so friendly, helpful and polite when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and thoroughly enjoyed seeing your lessons and other activities. Watching you making your animations and also looking at your school website told us so much about the very interesting things you get to do. You have produced some wonderful art work, have done fun things in Young Enterprise events and have found out a lot about how your new school building is built.

We found that Glendene School and Community Arts College is a good school. This is because your headteacher, staff and governors work hard to make sure your school is the best it can be. You make good progress and become confident young people; you are right to care for and be proud of your school. We also found out that your school takes good care of you. You are safe and your behaviour in school and with your friends shows how you all get on really well together.

In your lessons you are learning so many different things and we want your teachers to watch carefully to find out everything you have learnt and then plan more exciting new work for you. As you get older we want you to be able to choose things to do that you will be really interested in and we have asked your teachers to plan new things for you so you can learn new skills and get qualifications to help you in the future.

Please carry on working hard. We wish you continued success.

Yours sincerely

Ann Muxworthy
Lead inspector

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