

# Southlands School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108653
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	356403
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 April 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michele Crichton

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	106
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Cyril Freeman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Erskine
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Beach Road Tynemouth, North Shields Tyne and Wear NE30 2QR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 16 lessons and 16 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of students, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including those relating to self-evaluation, the curriculum, students' progress and safeguarding. They also took into account the views of 27 parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the inspection team.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The different needs of all students in the school and how effectively they are met by staff.
- The consistency of positive outcomes for all student groups in the school.
- The clarity of assessment and progress monitoring procedures throughout the school to ensure all students make appropriate progress.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in ensuring accurate self-evaluation and school improvement.

## Information about the school

All students at Southlands School have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides predominantly for students with moderate learning difficulties and also for students with additional social, emotional and behavioural needs. Almost all the students are of White British heritage and all speak English as their main language. There are twice as many boys as girls. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Ten students are currently in the care of the local authority. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its range of quality marks and has added Creative Partnerships School accreditation. The school has on-site provision called EPICC (Extended Provision for the Inclusion of Challenging Children), catering for students' specific needs.

**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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school which deserves its strong reputation with parents and carers. Their positive views are reflected well in the comments, 'The staff are like an extended family' and 'I believe Southlands is the very best school that my son could attend.'

Owing to the nature of the students' special educational needs and/or disabilities, students are working well below their expected levels of learning on entry to Southlands. These difficulties mean that the majority of students are unlikely to meet national expectations in terms of their attainment. However, with good teaching and carefully tailored learning programmes all students make good progress from their individual starting points. This also enables a small minority of students to reach average levels of attainment by the time they leave school.

Students enjoy and benefit from the extensive range of activities and opportunities available to them through the wealth of partnerships that Southlands has with other schools and colleges in the locality. Overall good behaviour and above average attendance, together with students' good work-place skills, prepare them well for their next stage of education. Students feel valued because they have good relationships with staff throughout the school. Good quality teaching and assessment procedures ensure that each student makes good progress socially and emotionally as well as academically. A range of interesting and relevant activities such as beauty therapy, mechanics and creative arts enhances the curriculum to further promote good outcomes for students.

Leadership and management are good. So too is the capacity for continued and sustained improvement. The school is well led and managed by staff who are committed to students' continual improvement. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and where more improvement is needed. This is achieved by constant and extensive self-evaluation and monitoring, and leads to effective action planning. As a result, for example, students are now more involved in assessing their own learning. The effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements is satisfactory; however, the documentation does not always reflect the examples of good day-to-day procedures that are evident across the school. The governing body is supportive and increasing well informed. It does not, however, robustly monitor and evaluate all aspects of school life equally well.

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

- Ensure all safeguarding documentation reflects the good day-to-day practice seen across school.
- Develop the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that it monitors and evaluates the organisation of the school more rigorously.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students respond well to Southlands creative and supportive learning environment. Consequently, an industrious atmosphere prevails across the school. For example, in one good Key Stage 4 information and communication technology lesson, students were active in their own learning as they blended previous skills with those currently being acquired using video imaging and computer programs, and by adding music and other special effects to a sequence of film they had previously recorded. Students were then questioned to think analytically and critically, to evaluate their own work and that of others and to justify and fully explain their answers. The quality of students' learning and progress, including in English and mathematics, is good from their individual starting points. For certain students this results in them gaining GCSE passes at levels ranging from grades A to C and A to G. Behaviour is good overall and, in the majority of lessons, it makes a strong contribution to students' learning. Students are fully aware of, and respond positively to, the school's reward system. Individualised learning programmes are in place and this ensures that all students, regardless of their needs, achieve and develop well academically but also socially and emotionally. For example, there are a range of interesting courses to access such as Digital Photography, DJ training, Kart construction and lifesaving. These activities are valuable in developing confidence, teamwork, self-esteem and independence. Additionally, activities such as beauty therapy not only extend students' skills but also benefit residents in local care homes who receive manicures, hair treatments and facials. This represents just one way in which students make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Students have a good understanding of factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. For example, they access a range of specialist physical education sessions including football coaching, dance and gymnastics. Additionally, the after-school 'cook it club' is very popular and well attended by both girls and boys. Students say they feel safe in school and that they can talk to members of staff if they need to discuss their worries and concerns. This supports the positive ethos in the school.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

Good learning takes place across the school. This is because the majority of staff carefully plan, resource and execute lessons that are specific to the needs and interests of learners. Skilled teaching and support staff work together well as a team and take learning further by posing questions to make students think. In the few examples where teaching is less than good, it is frequently because activities are not challenging enough, especially for the more-able students, too many worksheets are used or because resources are not appropriate to students' ages. Most staff use assessment information well to monitor progress and to set challenging learning targets. A revised assessment procedure has been introduced to track students' understanding of learning, and this runs alongside existing staff procedures. It also serves to ensure students contribute to their own learning.

The curriculum is good across both key stages. It is imaginatively enhanced by a range of activities and after-school clubs to offer learning opportunities that meet students' changing needs as they move up through the school. For example, at Key Stage 3, students participate in young enterprise activities which begin to establish skills directly related to the workplace. At Key Stage 4 a 'Moving On' programme enables students to further develop these skills and knowledge and apply them in a range of vocational

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courses such as catering, beauty therapy, floristry, joinery and business and enterprise. Additionally GCSE courses and examinations are available to students more suited to this type and level of learning, for example, in subjects ranging from communication studies to mathematics.

The personal qualities of staff contribute significantly to the good level of care, guidance and support for all those who attend the school. A good sense of humour, patience, consistency and a genuine interest in the personal development of the students were attributes repeatedly seen in staff. These secure good relationships with students. Students with more complex needs receive additional support from the Extended Provision for the Inclusion of Challenging Children, based in the school. Here skilled staff complete extended and highly personalised assessments and programmes unique to each student to ensure they have opportunities to make the best possible progress in all areas of their development. Additionally, well-established links with a range of agencies are sensitively used throughout the school to best support both students and their families. Transition arrangements are also effective in settling students securely into their next stage of learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership at all levels is reflective and focused on moving the school forward. Leaders have a strong vision for the future and have identified clearly the school's strengths and areas for improvement. To achieve this, a school development team is securely in place composed of teaching, support and administrative staff in addition to the senior leaders. All of these groups contribute effectively to the school's accurate evaluation of its effectiveness. Safeguarding procedures are met appropriately and are in line with statutory procedures. All staff training regarding safeguarding is up to date and all adults who work with students are checked to ensure their suitability to do so. However, although logs and records are kept they are not always efficiently organised.

The governing body is supportive of the school and most of its members know its strengths and weaknesses. However, the governing body does not consistently ensure that relevant and appropriate documentation is efficiently organised to reflect the firmly established good practices across the school. A strong commitment to the individual lies at the heart of the school's ethos and this ensures equality of opportunity is well promoted throughout the school. The school works effectively to promote cohesion within the local community. However, it acknowledges that additional links to wider communities and to global connections are yet to be fully established. The school has a close and positive

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relationship with parents and carers. This is sustained through regular newsletters, texting, phone calls and face-to-face meetings to ensure that they and school staff work together closely for the benefit of the children.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were extremely positive about the school's provision and the outcomes students achieve. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns, but inspection findings support the positive views of the overwhelming majority.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Southlands School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 106 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	56	13	36	1	3	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	21	58	14	39	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	64	11	31	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	42	19	53	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	61	12	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	64	12	33	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	64	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	64	12	33	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	56	14	39	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	72	9	25	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	75	8	22	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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 April 2011

Dear Students,

**Inspection of Southlands School, North Shields, NE30 2QR**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. It was lovely to meet and talk with you. You told us honestly about what you liked and sometimes disliked about school and we thank you for your fairness and openness. We judged that Southlands is a good school. It was very clear from our discussions and the questionnaire replies we received from you, and from your parents and carers, that you are generally happy at school, and think that you are safe and cared for well. You also knew lots about being and keeping healthy, and you help in school and the local community as much as you can. As well as working hard, you are also well behaved. You are also making good progress in your learning. However, we think there are a few things that could be improved further at Southlands by the leaders and managers in the school. These are:

- ensure that there is efficient organisation of all relevant and appropriate safeguarding documentation in the school
- ensure the governing body checks that all policies are in place and that it regularly monitors and evaluates all aspects of school life.

We know that you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Michele Crichton

Lead inspector

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