

Kilton Thorpe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111788
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	378360
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2011
Reporting 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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Bowman
Headteacher	Kevin Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons, taught by 13 different teaching staff.

Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils of the school. The school's work was observed and policies, governing body minutes, school improvement targets, external reports and pupils' progress were scrutinised. The inspectors took into account the findings from the 48 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and from questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- The effectiveness with which leaders raise achievement and drive forward improvements.
- The extent to which pupils' achievement is good for all key stages and groups.
- Whether the teaching and learning enable pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- The success with which the school provides a curriculum with good opportunities for accreditation.

Information about the school

Kilton Thorpe is an average-sized special school. The nature of the intake is changing significantly. Although the school includes pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, the vast majority of pupils arriving in recent years have autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils attend from across the borough of Redcar and Cleveland and some have experienced significant disruption in their education prior to joining the school. Most pupils are White British and a high proportion are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are no speakers of English as an additional language. The school has attained specialist school status in arts and achieved Healthy School status.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Kilton Thorpe is an outstanding school. The school exemplifies its mission statement 'Promoting life-long learning through quality education, respect and equality for all'. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school's caring ethos and the support their children receive. Typical of their comments is, 'An excellent school which is supportive of my child and the family and always happy to help where they can.'

Outcomes for pupils are excellent. Pupils greatly enjoy their lessons because they are highly interested and have lots of fun in their learning. They make good progress from their individual starting points because teachers and other adults understand their needs and use assessment well. The extremely well-planned and creative curriculum has some exceptional opportunities for learning based in practical situations and the expertise of staff to meet individual needs provides excellent care, guidance and support. Leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage has focused extremely well on developing high quality provision leading to outstanding outcomes for children. The good outcomes in the sixth form are supported well by the good teaching and the progress pupils make from the point they enter school. However, curriculum pathways are not developed well enough to meet the changing needs of pupils entering the sixth form.

The highly effective leadership team has developed an exceptionally strong and tangible sense of common purpose; striving to raise achievement for all pupils by continual improvements within teaching, sharing existing expertise among staff and taking account of the most current research into effective learning. The school's focus on continually and systematically evaluating practice and setting priorities is an area of outstanding practice and the excellent relationships with parents, carers and partners of the school support an outstanding capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take further steps in ensuring the curriculum in the sixth form meets the individual needs and aspirations of all pupils by:
 - identifying curriculum pathways that lead to a range of levels of accreditation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils make consistently good progress in their lessons when measured against their individual starting points, which are low in relation to age-related expectations. The achievement of all groups of pupils is good. Pupils on the autistic spectrum thrive in equal measure to all other pupils and clearly benefit from environments and communication systems that support their social communication and interaction needs. Pupils enjoy their learning and their behaviour in lessons is excellent, supporting a high level of engagement in activities and acceptance of challenge to improve their learning. In one class, pupils with complex learning needs were building three-dimensional models, and were able to explain the difference between two and three-dimensional shapes. The small number of more-able pupils with less complex needs gain success in GCSE courses, such as English and science. This is supported by other recognised forms of success in Entry Level and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network awards. There has been particular success in the high number of secondary and sixth form pupils gaining accreditation in entry level arts and design. These results demonstrate how well pupils build on their prior learning and benefit from the cumulative effect of good-quality teaching.

Pupils behave extremely well because they are happy, friendly and caring towards each other and staff. They gain important knowledge and skills to give them an excellent understanding of being healthy. Pupils say they feel safe and the wider aspects of personal safety are supported extremely well through the high level of instruction on safety. This was seen in the upper school assembly where pupils demonstrated safe practice in moving a table. Parents and carers strongly agree that their children feel happy and safe at school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. There is a well-developed sense of school community and this has provided insightful ideas to support the design of the outside play areas. The school assemblies provide a dynamic focus which enables pupils to develop an excellent understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils raise funds for charities and engage well with local schools, community partners and residential homes in arts and dance activities. By the time pupils transfer to the school's post-16 provision, college or employment they have benefited from good opportunities to apply skills and abilities in a range of situations. The above average attendance of the majority of pupils and the high level of interest for involvement in practical and creative experiences, prepare them well for making a good contribution to their future well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good and secures 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 instance through providing support to picture exchange communication systems and sensory learning. Teachers and support staff use a broad range of assessment techniques well. In good lessons teachers apply their specialist skills and knowledge well to motivate and challenge pupils to achieve their best. Some exceptional teaching was seen, in the teaching of literacy, where pupils had excellent opportunities to reflect on their learning and develop their ideas. Questioning is used well to determine pupils' understanding of what is being taught and what they have remembered. High-quality classroom resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), and practical activities provide engaging and exciting opportunities for learning.

The curriculum is excellent. Kilton Thorpe's specialist status as a school for arts is well deserved as it inspires creativity supporting real, enriched and exciting experiences that contribute extremely well to pupils' development. Self-esteem is positively promoted through the curriculum which places a strong emphasis on basic skills and contributes to pupils' excellent outcomes. A range of specialist programmes and therapies are supporting pupils' physical well-being and sensory needs extremely well. Through highly effective partnerships, pupils share excellent experiences of sports, arts and drama and gain a good understanding of working life through business and college connections.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school has created a supportive and caring setting that successfully promotes learning and enjoyment equally. It has excellent provision of a school counsellor to support pupils' emotional needs.

¹The 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.

Transition is supported extremely well through thoughtful preparation and excellent relationships with schools and college. The school has been proactive in ensuring excellent partnerships with parents, carers and agencies through a range of communication including its website which supports high quality sharing of information.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The highly experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher are confident in their vision for school improvement and are focused on driving through and securing nothing less than excellence for pupils. This is shared with all those with leadership responsibility. The school uses self-evaluation extremely well to engage and communicate with stakeholders and improve its performance. This is seen in the most recent evaluation of the ICT and recommendations to introduce new equipment to enhance communication systems and arts. Monitoring systems for teaching and pupils' progress are rigorous and effective in identifying priorities for improving achievement. The recent change in the needs of pupils entering school has been supported and planned for extremely well through training and development of staff in new and specialist areas. Leaders and managers listen to pupils' views and use them well to plan for the future. This can be seen in the most recent opportunity to plan play and outdoor areas.

Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and have been highly supportive in developing the school's vision for arts and application for Building Schools for the Future. They actively monitor the school's work and strive to improve the provision for the school. Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities conscientiously, supported by a high level of expertise in health and safety. Consequently, safeguarding is addressed extremely well and statutory requirements are met. School leaders act responsibly in their regard to pupil and staff safety, including careful and effective risk assessments.

The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. There is a good variety of opportunities for pupils to engage with community groups within and beyond the school with some opportunity to mix with others from different ethnic backgrounds.

Engagement with parents and carers, and other partnerships with local schools and health professionals are all outstanding. They add great value to pupils' learning and well-being, and enhance the school's specialist status in arts. Staff manage communications with partners and agencies extremely well to ensure effective support for pupils and their families.

The school is wholly committed to the 'individual rights of the child' and this secures outstanding equality of opportunity. Outcomes for different groups are carefully monitored to ensure they are equality positive and excellent activities and inspirational role models encourage enjoyment and participation. The school is a family community with a very caring ethos. Staff and resources are very well deployed to support pupils' needs and the school offers excellent value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is an integral part of the school and shares its many strengths, especially the highly effective partnerships between parents, carers and other agencies. Many outcomes, such as children feeling safe, are exemplary. Children's expression of safety is best exemplified in the confident way they use the soft play and explore new environments on autumn walks. They make good progress because they are taught well. Teaching staff are very skilled in recording the progress children make and capturing evidence of their learning. Children receive specialist help in learning how to communicate their feelings and learning needs through approaches, such as picture exchange and communication systems. This helps them develop their independence while demonstrating the progress they are making in their communication. Children have access to some excellent resources both indoor and outdoor and are fully included in all activities and school events. Appropriately high levels of staffing ensure that all pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported. Leadership and management are outstanding. The excellent quality of documentation and monitoring of progress supports excellent identification of priorities for the provision and for individual children's needs.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

Students currently on roll in the sixth form have a range of learning needs with an increasing number with complex needs and autistic spectrum difficulties. There is good provision for all students. Those students with profound, multiple learning difficulties experience highly effective programmes to develop their sensory awareness. Students with autistic difficulties experience a range of immediate sensory activities designed to consolidate and extend their communication and interaction skills. Those students with severe learning difficulties have good provision to promote independence, life skills and communication skills. Teaching is enhanced by the arts specialism and provides creative and practical approaches to learning. The curriculum is evolving because students entering the sixth form have more complex learning and communication needs. The school therefore, has rightly identified developing new pathways for accreditation to support the change in learning needs as a priority. Outcomes are good overall. Behaviour and the extent to which students feel safe and understand being healthy are outstanding. Care, guidance and support are of a high quality and ensure that students are well prepared for their learning and personal development challenges beyond school. The sixth form is well led and senior leaders have developed effective partnerships with schools and other providers to extend learning and gain accreditation.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Those who did were extremely positive about the school's provision and the outcomes it achieves. The quality of teaching, pupils' progress, meeting their needs and feeling safe were rated particularly highly. One comment stated, 'Kilton Thorpe is brilliant. It has helped my child so much and still does. My child would not be where he is now if it wasn't for this school.' Many parents and carers expressed similar sentiments on the way the school has changed their children's lives.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kilton Thorpe 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 126 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	73	10	21	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	40	83	7	15	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	67	13	27	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	58	19	40	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	33	69	14	29	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	63	16	33	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	63	16	33	1	2	1	2
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)	26	54	17	35	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	75	11	23	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	71	12	25	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	63	15	31	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	36	75	11	23	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	77	10	21	0	0	1	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



23 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kilton Thorpe School, Saltburn-By-the-Sea, TS12 2UW

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. Your art work around the school is fabulous and your school newsletters told us so much about the very interesting things you get to do. You have been to Stewarts Park, flying kites in the autumn wind, street dancing at the Dance Centre and finding out about Victorian Saltburn.

You told us how happy you are in school and we can see why. We found Kilton Thorpe is an outstanding school. This is because your headteacher, staff and governors work extremely 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 your school. We were delighted with the many exciting activities you get to do in and out of school. It is impressive the way you help in the community and make such wonderful things as the 'Welcome mosaic' for the residents at Hawthorn Care. We think you are learning so many new things and when you get to sixth form we want you to be able to choose things to do that you will be really interested in. Because of this, we have asked your teachers to plan new things for you so you can get qualifications to help you in the future.

We also found out that your school takes excellent care of you and helps you make friends and get on together. Your arts and enterprise are helping older pupils to be well prepared for the time they leave school. Please carry on working hard and we wish you continued success.

Yours sincerely

Ann Muxworthy
Lead inspector

