

# Stone Hill School

Barnsley Road, Scawsby, Doncaster DN5 7UB

**Inspection dates** 10–11 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding, both academically and in the strides they make in their personal development. From usually low starting points pupils make outstanding progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. Last year no pupil made less than expected progress in any subject.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well. They demonstrate an accurate understanding of the needs of each pupil and plan lessons which enthuse and engage them in their learning.
- Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy school. Relationships are excellent as a result of which attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils behave very well in lessons and demonstrate a very high level of understanding about how to keep themselves safe.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders at all levels understand their responsibilities and carry out their duties assiduously. Senior leaders know their school well and plan in detail how to improve further.
- Governance is outstanding. The members of the governing body are led by an extremely effective, knowledgeable and skilled Chair. They are very well-informed and committed to continuing school improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw all teachers during observations of 15 lessons, some of which were joint observations with senior and middle leaders.
- Discussions were held with: members of the governing body; a local authority representative; a group of pupils, and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with specialist staff from the hearing and visually impaired support service. The inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- A number of documents relating to school improvement, pupil progress, curriculum development, assessment for the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the school's parent and pupil surveys, among others, were scrutinised.
- Additionally the inspectors took account of the five responses on Parent View and the 42 staff questionnaires returned.

## Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead Inspector

Additional inspector

Adrian Simm

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Stone Hill School is a large special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and additional, often complex, needs. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who have an autistic spectrum disorder as part of their profile has increased since the last inspection and is now approximately two thirds of the pupil population.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low and there are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and entitled to receive the pupil premium is twice the national average.
- Older pupils attend courses at Doncaster College with support from staff of the school and a small number of pupils access GCSE courses in school and at Ridgewood Academy.
- The school provides outreach support for pupils with autism or social communication difficulties in a small number of schools and pupil referral units in the local authority. Additionally, the school runs autism-specific courses including Earlybird and Cygnet for parents and practitioners.
- Since the previous inspection the school now provides for pupils aged from five to 16 years. It has recently developed as a resource base for pupils who have a significant visual impairment together with additional learning difficulties.
- The school has obtained a number of awards for its work including: Healthy School Award including Active Playgrounds, Basic Skills Charter Mark for both primary and secondary schools, Food for Life Bronze Award, Sing Up Platinum Award.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching even further so that it is more consistently outstanding by:
  - making sure each pupil knows what they are expected to achieve every lesson
  - encouraging pupils to learning independently before providing support.

## Inspection judgements

### **The achievement of pupils** **is outstanding**

- In all lessons observed by inspectors, pupils made at least good progress and often they made outstanding progress in their learning. This matches well to the school's own observations of teaching and learning and their information about the progress that pupils make. They check that their judgements are accurate with other special and mainstream schools.
- Pupils usually enter the school with low and sometimes very low standards. Although they make outstanding progress during their time at the school, the nature of their' learning difficulties and disabilities may sometimes cause them to slow or even regress at times. The school checks their progress regularly to identify if this is happening quickly and gives them extra support to get back on track.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently first-rate for all groups of pupils across all key stages. There are no differences in how well pupils with different special educational needs learn and progress. Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and for those from minority ethnic backgrounds ensures these pupils do as well as the rest.
- Pupils who have additional disabilities such as visual and hearing impairments make excellent progress because teachers adapt activities and ensure they are knowledgeable about different ways of communicating or technologies to assist these pupils to succeed.
- Pupils practise their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in all lessons, as a result of which their achievements in these subjects are outstanding
- On admission to the school, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are provided with highly structured, individualised programmes, devised by exceptionally knowledgeable and experienced specialist staff. This helps them to quickly settle, develop their communication and understand the routines of their school day so that they can make progress in their learning.
- Pupils benefit from a very interesting range of subjects which is help them to develop the skills they need to successfully move on to the next stage in their learning. As a result, pupils leave school as mature, independent and responsible young adults who have learned the value of education.

### **The quality of teaching** **is outstanding**

- Evidence of pupils' outstanding learning and progress is testimony to the extremely high quality teaching they receive. This is true across all subjects and for all groups of pupils.
- Teachers are highly skilled in adapting their teaching for pupils with a range of different needs and abilities. The school has provided extremely good staff training to ensure they have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the increasingly complex needs of the pupils at the school.
- Excellent relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils help the pupils to stay on task and get the most they can from their lessons, although over-eager teaching assistants can very occasionally step in too soon to help pupils who might be challenged to do more work independently.
- Teachers have very high expectations of what individual pupils can achieve but do not always share these with every pupil in all lesson so pupils do not always understand what is required of them
- Pupils are encouraged to attempt ambitious work. For example, a group of younger pupils were learning how to vote in the school council elections soon to take place and linking this to a visit from the constituency MP. Older pupils were recognising onomatopoeia, alliteration and other features of poems so that they could include these in their own writing.
- Lessons moves at a brisk pace and very effective questioning, based on good subject knowledge, develops pupils' understanding. In a physical education lesson pupils were able to understand and explain the health and safety reasons for warming up. Staff praise and

encourage pupils often to build their self-confidence and reduce anxieties which might restrict their learning.

- Teachers know the pupils very well. They check how effectively the pupils are learning very carefully and plan challenging tasks to move them on to their next learning steps. Their marking includes comments which help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Comments in the school's parent survey and in the few responses on Parent View indicate that they strongly believe their children are taught extremely well. The pupils agree with this. 'The teachers here are fantastic; they make us work hard but we learn a lot', one pupil told inspectors and his friends agreed.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The strong relationships between pupils and staff lend support to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Rich and varied opportunities for building on pupils' personal development permeate all aspects of what the school does. Pupils are encouraged to take on increasing amounts of responsibility and to make decisions for themselves.
- Pupils feel they contribute to decision making in the school as a result of which the funds were found to build a Year 11 base, to provide fitness equipment in the senior playground and an astro-turf pitch. Pupils consider the needs of others. They make decisions in the school council about fund-raising, most recently for the M25 project for homeless people in Doncaster. They look after each other in school and make sure that visually impaired pupils, for instance, have everything they need.
- In a meeting with inspectors, a group of pupils listened respectfully to each other's views. They have very well-developed notions of fairness and of right and wrong. For some pupils, especially those with autism, these opinions can be rigid but staff are highly skilled in helping them to think through their views and understand those of others, even if they do not always agree with them.
- Pupils are extremely positive about their learning experiences and show excellent attitudes to work in lessons. They want to please staff and do well for themselves. As one older student said, 'I don't like writing but I know it's good for me'.
- They demonstrate an excellent understanding of bullying which they do not believe is a problem in school. They talk knowledgeably about why it is important to follow rules and guidance to keep themselves safe. In a personal, social, and health education lesson, pupils in Year 7 made sensible choices about which road safety features would be best to have around the outside of a school.
- The nature of their learning difficulties and disabilities can result in pupils occasionally needing to leave the classroom. Consistent ways of helping them to manage their own behaviours and quickly return mean that any disruption to learning is minimal. Support is provided by highly skilled and well-qualified staff in the field of autism, and this expertise is shared with other schools.
- Staff training in working with those pupils who may experience difficulties in managing their behaviour has resulted in a reduction in both the number of serious behaviour incidents and in the number of exclusions since the previous inspection.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now higher than for most secondary and special schools.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The school's senior leaders and managers, including the governing body, have demonstrated an outstanding capacity to improve pupil outcomes since the previous inspection. This has

included innovative developments such the inclusion of younger pupils, the development of the visually impaired resource base in partnership with the local authority sensory support service and the building of a Year 11 base.

- Senior leaders check how well the school is doing extremely effectively, resulting in a well-focused plan to develop the school further.
  - Middle leaders undertake their work rigorously and contribute highly effectively to whole-school improvement.
  - The management of staff performance is robust and targets for improvement are linked very effectively to the pupils' learning and progress. The approach to staff training means that all feel well-equipped and confident to meet the range of learning difficulties and disabilities of the pupils and to implement new ways of working such as the programme for teaching letters and sounds.
  - Pupils enjoy the rich variety of subjects they are taught. Many visits out of school and visitors into school give pupils opportunities to try new skills and test themselves.
  - Parents are very appreciative of the support the school provides to them, of the courses the school runs and information and advice they are given. They generally feel well informed about what their children are learning in school.
  - The partnerships the school has developed with a range of agencies and other providers have ensured the total needs of pupils are met exceptionally well. They also enable the school to share its expertise with others. The links with the neighbouring academy and with Doncaster College contribute well to what the school offers, creating more opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications and preparing them to move on when they finish school.
  - The local authority rightly provides only light touch support for this outstanding school.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is highly effective and brings a wide range of expertise to the leadership of the school.
    - Governors are highly knowledgeable about the work of the school and engage in training and events to keep up to date with developments.
    - Governors have strong links with senior and middle leaders to support the continual raising of standards.
    - The governing body is open to considering new developments to create better opportunities for pupils with special needs in the local authority.
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## 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>	135547
<b>Local authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	402717

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	114
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Gallafent
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Leone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01302 800090
<b>Fax number</b>	01302 800099
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