

Holgate Meadows Community Special School

Lindsay Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S5 7WE

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the last inspection, the leadership team, with the support of the governing body, have moved the school forward by improving pupils' attendance and achievement.
- This continuous commitment to improvement shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.
- The majority of pupils arrive at school with skills and knowledge consistently below those expected for their age, often because of gaps in their learning. All have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, social and emotional needs. Many have additional needs, for example, autism.
- Once they settle into the routines of school they re-engage with learning and make good progress over time.
- Teaching is good overall. In the best lessons the pace is fast, the curriculum is interesting and enjoyable and pupils are clear about what they need to learn.
- The majority of pupils behave well both inside and outside the classroom. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and play a key role in guiding pupils to improve their behaviour and attendance.
- The safety and care of all pupils are at the centre of the school's ethos. This is appreciated by parents and pupils alike.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Systems currently in place to improve the behaviour of pupils new to the school are not yet sufficiently robust.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not yet as strong as that in English.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, the inspection team observed 16 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 12 teachers. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the executive headteacher and head of school. The inspection team also observed the teaching of reading.
- The inspection team had discussions with members of the governing body, pupils, senior leaders and a member of the school staff. A telephone conversation was undertaken with a representative of the local educational authority.
- Seven parents made their views known to the inspection team through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The inspection team also took into consideration the views of a further 39 parents who had completed a recent questionnaire for the school.
- The inspection team observed the work of the school through the scrutiny of health and safety documentation, pupils' work, teachers' curriculum planning and the school's system for tracking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Massett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holgate Meadows Community Special School caters for the needs of up to 98 boys with behavioural, social and emotional needs. Many pupils also have additional needs, for example, autistic spectrum disorder and learning difficulties.
- The majority of boys who attend are of White British origin and all are aged between seven and 16 and have a statement of special educational needs.
- Approximately two thirds are known to be eligible for the pupil premium which is more than the national average.
- Currently the school is led and managed by an executive headteacher and a head of school.
- The school also runs an offsite facility a short distance from the school which provides an alternative learning environment for a small number of Holgate Meadow pupils and other local mainstream schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics to match achievement in English by:
 - developing a whole-school approach to teaching mathematics
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' books gives consistent feedback to pupils on how to improve their work.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils new to the school by:
 - ensuring systems in place to support pupils' behaviour are robust and effectively monitored
 - ensuring the positive behaviour policy is consistently applied across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils nearly always join the school with large gaps in their learning. Many have previously missed significant periods of time in school for a variety of reasons. However, once they join the caring environment of Holgate Meadows the majority settle, re-engage with learning and make good progress from low starting points.
- Many pupils lack the skills required for learning, for example, sitting down and listening. Because staff are skilled at meeting pupils' needs, all groups, including those with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, those of White British origin and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, make good progress both academically, socially and emotionally.
- Data collected by school shows that many parents feel that their children make good progress. A small minority who shared their views on the online questionnaire (Parents' View) feel school does not give their pupils sufficient homework. This view, however, is not held by the majority of parents, nor was it substantiated by inspection findings.
- School's clear focus on developing basic literacy skills ensures that pupils make good progress despite their low starting points. Staff firmly believe that pupils need to become proficient readers in order to succeed in the classroom. The carefully organised, mixed-aged literacy classes held every morning not only improve pupils' reading skills, but also help develop their understanding of phonics (which shows the connection between letters and the sounds they make). This concerted approach has improved literacy skills across the school.
- Pupils achieve less well in mathematics. This has been recognised by school staff and a whole-school focus on mathematics has very recently been implemented. Pupils are now taught daily in ability groups on a structured curriculum designed to address specifically the gaps in their learning. However, although it is clear pupils are making better progress, the impact of this is not yet fully measurable.
- Pupils often join the school at different times in their academic career. A carefully constructed assessment is undertaken by all pupils when they arrive and is used to set challenging targets, from the outset, across the curriculum.
- The achievement of all pupils is effectively tracked and monitored and pupils are fully involved in target setting through regular pupil review meetings.
- Secondary-aged pupils are offered a balanced and relevant curriculum whether they attend the offsite unit or main school. The vast majority leave school with an array of qualifications and accreditations in line with national expectations.
- As a result of their academic success and the continuous support provided by school, pupils make a successful transfer to further education or the world of work. This is evidenced by the very small number of last year's leavers who are currently not in education, employment or training.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is good and teachers and support staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Staff all work together to plan learning across the curriculum. As a result, each pupil's academic and social needs are met. For example, although targets set for learning are keenly focussed on moving pupils forward academically, they also take into consideration pupils' social and behavioural needs.
- Pupils say teachers make learning interesting and take into account their interests and aspirations. As a result the majority of pupils enjoy school and engage with new challenges, whatever their level of need.
- An example of this could be seen in an excellent English lesson in which the teacher's choice of

book, *Blood and Spit*, engaged pupils well. Their enjoyment of the book was evident from their high level of empathy for the characters and their feelings and emotions. As a result, they all participated well in the ensuing discussion demonstrating an excellent level of understanding and sensitivity to issues raised.

- The best lessons are characterised by fast pace and learning and behavioural objectives are clearly communicated to pupils from the outset.
- Recent changes to the curriculum have had a positive effect on pupils' learning. Enrichment activities, including residential trips to Paris and a variety of other destinations, have contributed well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The role of support staff in the majority of lessons is clear, enabling all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, to make equal progress.
- The majority of staff use praise effectively and consistently apply the positive behaviour and reward system. Where this is the case pupils engage with learning effectively.
- Marking of pupils' books is regularly undertaken, but the marking policy is not yet consistently applied. However, in the majority of classrooms feedback given to pupils shows them clear ways to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around school despite their high levels of social, emotional and behavioural needs. However, due to a larger than usual intake of pupils arriving at school at the same time at the beginning of term the standard of behaviour observed dipped, particularly in the lower school.
- Analysis of logs of behavioural incidents over the past three years showed this was not typical for the school. Staff and senior leaders had recently taken action, putting in a place a coherent plan, which was beginning to show impact. However, systems for checking behaviour, for example, the number of times pupils go into the turn-around rooms, are not sufficiently robust and this reduces the effectiveness of analysis of data.
- The majority of pupils show a good level of respect and caring attitudes towards each other and staff. This was particularly evident through discussions with pupils. Their opinion was that all pupils were accepted as themselves by their peers and those with, for example, a different sexual orientation were not subjected to homophobic bullying or harassment.
- Parents and pupils feel that school keeps them safe. Older pupils feel that the open approach taken by staff to keeping safe both physically and emotionally gives them good guidance on how to make right choices in life.
- Many pupils said they enjoyed school and that the small size of school and high levels of support offered by staff made them feel 'understood and valued'. The school's focus on supporting pupils' personal and social development in order to build self-esteem and belief in their own abilities has contributed significantly to the marked improvement in pupils' attitudes to learning.
- School leaders' philosophy of emphasising positive behaviour is clearly confirmed by the school's record of not permanently excluding any pupil in the last three years.

The leadership and management are good

- Despite significant changes in the roles of the leadership team, the effective and visionary approach taken by senior leaders has continued to move the school forward. The executive headteacher and head of school make a formidable team who ensure that self-evaluation processes are clear, insightful and accurate at identifying the strengths and areas for improvement in the school.
- The performance of staff is a key driver to continuous improvement. Targets for staff are clearly linked to the school's development plan. Since the last inspection, school leaders have re-

organised staff teams and have developed effective systems for improving the attendance of pupils. This demonstrates their ability to continue to drive the school forward.

- Teaching has continued to improve overall since the last inspection. Improvements in the curriculum, particularly in English, have enhanced the quality of lessons and improved pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
 - The positive ethos of the school ensures staff and pupils alike feel valued. Systems which promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are securely in place. As a result, all groups of pupils make equally good progress.
 - The clear picture of sustained improvement within the school is recognised by the local authority which provides light touch support.
 - Whilst leaders and managers have clearly made significant progress since the last inspection, they are not yet providing outstanding leadership and management. For example, systems to improve the behaviour of those pupils new to school are not sufficiently robust. The whole-school approach to teaching mathematics is yet to be fully established and monitored.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - the governing body offers a good level of support and challenge to school leaders and has increased its capacity to do so since the last inspection by recruiting new well-qualified members
 - an example of this good level of support could be seen through the increased number of governor visits to the school since the last inspection.
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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

Unique reference number	126712
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	402408

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rose Slimani
Headteacher	Mr Tony Middleton
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2010
Telephone number	0114 245 6305
Fax number	0114 257 6761
Email address	enquiries@holgatemcs.sheffield.sch.uk

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