

Springhead School

Barry's Lane, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO12 4HA

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching does not promote good achievement because teachers do not plan in sufficient detail what students should learn in each lesson so progress is not as good as it should be.
- A few teachers' expectations of what students will achieve in lessons are too low so some students make only adequate progress.
- Policies for behaviour and safety lack detail so staff are sometimes unclear about what they should do in some situations.
- The sixth form requires improvement to ensure that less-able students make as much progress as the more-able.
- Subject leaders are not as involved as they need to be in examining how well different groups of students are progressing in their subject.
- When judging the quality of teaching senior leaders do not place sufficient emphasis on the impact of teaching on students' progress.
- The governing body does not know enough about how well different groups of students are progressing so they are unable to relate this information to rewarding teachers for their performance and their progress through the salary scale.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has built a team of staff who are highly committed to removing any barriers individual students may have to achieving their potential. This is greatly appreciated by families.
- The senior leadership team has guided the development of a creative and engaging curriculum in each key stage which enables students to develop future life skills.
- Students feel valued and know what they say is taken seriously and acted upon. They show how much they care about each other by the caring and deep friendships they make.
- The time students spend in 'The Learning Zone', an off-site provision, is very effective in developing their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors took account of the school’s self-evaluation and looked at the development plan, minutes of meetings, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers, and documents that tracks students’ progress.
- The inspectors observed nine lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed parts of five lessons.
- They held discussions with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors held discussions with students and looked at responses to a questionnaire from staff. The lead inspector spoke to a parent on the telephone, looked at written comments from a parent and took account of 15 responses from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela Shaw

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The majority of students at Springhead have severe learning difficulties; the rest of the students either have complex moderate learning difficulties or profound learning difficulties. A small minority has behavioural difficulties and a minority also has additional complex communication difficulties. The majority of students are boys.
- The school holds specialist status for cognition and learning.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The vast majority of students are of White British origin.
- The proportion of students that are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
- The school has an outreach role and has developed strong links with many mainstream schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better in order for individual students to make good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers' planning always makes it clear what students are expected to learn
 - all teachers have high enough expectations so that their students make good progress
 - each student knows exactly what is to be achieved in each lesson
 - support staff always know what they need to do to encourage each student to achieve their individual lesson target
 - individual students' progress is assessed against the targets set for the lesson
 - staff use signed communication more often.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - extending the role of subject leaders in evaluating the quality of teaching
 - more rigorously comparing the progress students make with the progress of similar students nationally
 - ensuring that staff training is always focused on the targets set for teachers to improve learning in classrooms
 - making sure that the governing body is given more information about students' progress so that it can challenge and support more robustly, particularly to manage and reward the performance of staff.
- Improve the leadership and management of students' behaviour and safety by:
 - reviewing behaviour and safety policies and procedures so that they contain more detail and ensure that staff are clear about how to handle various situations
 - making sure that staff training is monitored and kept up-to-date.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students enter the school with a variety of starting points. Since the last inspection, most students who have joined the sixth form have had moderate learning difficulties. Recently, younger pupils who have joined in Key Stage 2 have severe communication and behaviour difficulties. Although progress is sometimes good or better, it is too variable and overall, students' progress is not good enough.
- Students' progress in developing personal life skills is often good over time. This means that students are increasingly able to take control of what happens to them. School data show that students with additional behaviour or emotional needs often make good progress in their personal development.
- Students accept individual differences and expect equality of opportunity for everyone to be a priority at all times. For example, when researching the profile of a disabled athlete, their first comments are not about disability but about hair colour and clothes.
- Progress in communication skills for those students with severe learning difficulties is held back because not enough emphasis is given to signed communication. However, progress in speaking skills for those students with moderate learning difficulties is often good because there are many opportunities for conversation and discussion.
- Students' progress in reading is too variable. School data show that students' progress is slower currently in Year 6 and Year 8. The school has identified this and is taking action to accelerate the rate of progress.
- Additional resources are carefully selected and purchased to promote the progress of those students known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Although it is too early to identify the impact these are having on students' progress, school data show they make progress at a similar rate to that of their peers.
- In the sixth form, the curriculum is appropriately accredited and enables all students to achieve qualifications. However, the less-able students make less progress than the more-able students and overall their achievement requires improvement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, is too variable to enable students to make good progress overall.
- Where teaching is strongest, expectations are high and teachers ensure that students are continually engaged in challenging tasks. In lessons where teaching is good, teachers make effective use of opportunities to ensure that students can work independently and that they understand exactly what is to be achieved in the lesson.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers' planning does not make it clear enough what individual students are expected to achieve in a given period of time. This means that students are not always engaged well enough, or spend too long observing others at work to make good progress. Expectations of what students will achieve are sometimes too low.
- Students' skills and abilities are carefully assessed when they start school. Following this, each student is set a wide range of learning targets which are assessed regularly. However, these targets often prioritise their application of, rather than the acquisition of skills. This does not always result in students making consistently good progress when compared with the progress of students with the same starting points nationally.
- Some teaching assistants make a very good contribution to learning. Although some are skilful and often assume responsibility for the progress of individual students or small groups throughout lessons, others do not always know what they need to do to ensure that students reach their targets. Furthermore, teachers do not always check or guide the students when they

are assigned to a teaching assistant and as a result, those students do not always make good progress.

- In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes, some pupils' misbehaviour has a detrimental impact on the learning of other pupils. This is because the attention of staff is frequently being diverted to meet their needs.
- Some students work effectively in the well resourced outdoor area. However, on occasions, the arrangement and use of equipment does not contribute to good learning.
- Students of all ages and abilities learn well when their lessons take place in 'The Learning Zone'. For example, younger students immersed themselves in a Mexican-themed activity with great concentration and joy. 'The Learning Zone' is an excellent resource which is managed and planned expertly.
- Teachers ensure that they select interesting and engaging topics to involve students. For example, sixth form students visited and researched the local Peaseholm Park so that they had a good depth of knowledge when they made decisions about how to develop an area of ground next to 'The Learning Zone'. However, the overall quality of teaching for sixth-form students also requires improvement because less-able students' needs are met less well than those of the more-able.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Students are curious when a visitor is in the classroom and they are keen to know why they are there. Staff give good verbal information to promote understanding but do not use signed communication often enough.
- Students are helpful and very caring towards each other. In lessons, students unselfishly help less-able peers and genuine friendships are evident. There is very little bullying of any kind and any issues that arise are taken very seriously and managed well by staff.
- The majority of students attend very regularly. They try hard to respond as well as they can to additional guidance given to them by staff about the appropriate ways to behave. However, sometimes staff miss opportunities to give clear guidance about how to do so. As a result, some inappropriate behaviour persists, particularly in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Relationships between staff and students are warm. Staff are highly committed to securing the very best care and resources for the students. However, behaviour and safety policies do not make it clear what staff should do in particular situations. Paperwork is not fully completed. As a result, valuable information does not always contribute to school improvement.
- The vast majority of parents say that students feel safe and secure. They value highly the communication they have with the school and the informal nature of meetings with staff and are confident to raise issues. Although parents are fully involved with their child's behavioural support plans, they are not always made aware of any instances of physical handling of their child recorded by the school.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Although the leadership of the headteacher is strong, she has not used her evaluations of the quality of teaching effectively enough to pinpoint improvement priorities. Although she is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, the role of subject leaders, especially in reviewing the progress of different groups of students and in evaluating the quality of teaching, is underdeveloped.
- The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans are based on an extensive research base guided by Birmingham University materials which focus on understanding of how students with learning difficulties learn best. These principles are evident in daily practices. For example, the new sound and light equipment in the hydrotherapy pool has been carefully designed to the

school's specifications.

- The local authority knows the school well. Although it is active in its support, joint observations of lessons with senior leaders sometimes result in overgenerous evaluations of the quality of teaching. This is because they do not take enough account of the progress of all the students in the class.
 - The programme of training and professional development for staff is full and comprehensive. It has a good impact on improving teaching and learning in some areas. However, it is not sufficiently focused on the needs of individual teachers identified during lesson observations.
 - The curriculum is a strength. It meets the needs of the students well and is exciting and extensive. It promotes students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well and the weekly youth club makes an effective contribution to students' achievement.
 - Effective outreach partnerships ensure that students in mainstream primary schools nearby are supported well. Transition for those students who move between schools runs smoothly because links have already been established.
 - The development of post-19 provision, in partnership with the Yorkshire Coast College, has increased opportunities for all. In addition, transition processes to college have been strengthened because staff have worked together well.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - There is a small core of active governors who support and question with confidence.
 - The governing body does not yet receive or seek enough detailed information about the progress of groups of students, such as those in receipt of the pupil premium. As a result, they are unable to hold the school to account for ensuring that all groups of students make good progress.
 - Individual members of the governing body are involved in the management of teachers' performance but, since they are unable to relate performance to student progress, pay awards are not as closely linked to progress as they need to be.
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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	121772
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	403477

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Crossley
Headteacher	Deborah Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2008
Telephone number	01723 367829
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