

Holmwood School

Saltersgill Avenue, Middlesbrough, TS4 3PT

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have very successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement since the last inspection. Consequently, this has improved the school's performance considerably.
- The skilled and effective governing body provide good support and challenge.
- The majority of pupils arrive with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. They quickly respond to the encouragement provided by the staff by settling in well and making good progress.
- Good teaching and the use of a range of attractive resources interest and involve pupils and motivate them to learn well.
- Excellent systems are in place that ensure pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and consistently across the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is almost always exemplary considering their social, emotional and behavioural needs. Pupils truly enjoy being in school and working with the staff who support their learning.
- The school has the safety and well-being of all pupils as its priority. The highly effective liaison with parents and partnerships with agencies, contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good overall although some outstanding practice was observed.
- In some lessons, questioning does not always get the best out of pupils because teachers do not sufficiently draw on their subject knowledge to make pupils think harder.
- The curriculum is good rather than outstanding.
- Although pupils make good progress in English, to secure outstanding they need to further improve their speaking skills across the curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 13 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 10 teachers. The headteacher joined observations of teaching, including a learning walk across six lessons to hear pupils read. In addition, a further brief visit to six lessons focused on the curriculum, reading, writing and mathematics.
- The inspection team had discussions with teachers, a member of the governing body, pupils, senior leaders, parents, the parent support adviser and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team looked at the work of the school including pupils' behaviour and analysed documentation in relation to attendance, safeguarding, pupils' work and the school's system for checking on pupils' progress.
- No responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available to help plan the inspection.

Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary special school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs. Some pupils have autistic spectrum disorder and some, in addition to their behavioural needs, have learning difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and are boys. A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- There were no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection.
- The school is in a collaboration of special schools in Middlesbrough.
- The school provides outreach support to mainstream schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - asking pupils questions to make them think hard, that might have more than one possible answer, and that better develop their speaking skills
 - ensuring that all teaching staff use their subject knowledge to challenge pupils to do their best.
- Further improve pupils' achievements in English by introducing more opportunities for speaking across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- As a result of the effective approaches to meeting pupils' needs, all groups, including those children who are in the care of the local authority, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those in receipt of the pupil premium, make good progress.
- Prior to joining the school the great majority of pupils have experienced significant disruption in their education and some have been identified with additional learning needs. This has had a significant impact on the development of their knowledge and skills, which on entry to school, are well below those expected for their age. On entry to the school a significant number, particularly those who are in the care of the local authority, also lack the social and emotional skills they need for learning.
- Teaching staff are highly skilled in forming and maintaining good relationships and as a result, pupils learn well and develop emotionally and socially.
- The pupils enthusiastically talk about their work, a sign of how much they enjoy their learning.
- Parents agree with inspection findings that their children make good progress in English and mathematics. The view of one parent is representative of how parents feel about the progress their children are making. 'A fantastic change since he arrived. He has improved in literacy and numeracy and can now work out problems in his head. He really has improved. I would like to give the teachers five stars.'
- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Daily reading sessions across the school have improved pupils' reading skills and their confidence and progress in reading and writing. This clear focus on literacy skills is ensuring that pupils make good progress from their low starting points. However, pupils' weaker speaking skills affect their progress in English.
- A good proportion of pupils, including those children in care of the local authority, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those in receipt of pupil premium funding, return to their mainstream schools because of their academic success which is in line overall with national expectations by the time they leave Year 6.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is good overall with teachers and support staff being exceptionally good at meeting the social, emotional and behavioural needs of all pupils.
- The best lessons are well organised, resources are well chosen and what pupils will learn is made very clear to them. Lessons move along at a brisk pace and pupils are attentive and interested throughout. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and to work hard at all times. The way they organise their classrooms helps pupils to learn well.
- Teachers check on pupils' progress and their learning regularly. Books are marked thoroughly and pupils are given pointers on how to improve their work.
- The curriculum has a positive effect on pupils' achievement; however, some teachers do not use their subject knowledge well to develop pupils' speaking skills and challenge them to give their best.
- Many pupils have a lack of confidence. Staff use praise well to let pupils know they have been successful in their learning and behaviour and this greatly reduces any reluctance to learn and encourages pupils to be more forthcoming.
- There are good opportunities to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues. This was seen in a school assembly where pupils helped others to understand the meaning of Remembrance Day.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- High expectations, clear boundaries for behaviour, and the effective use of praise, all contribute to pupils feeling exceptionally safe at all times. Pupils' excellent behaviour, considering their needs and personal challenges, is reflected in their whole-hearted commitment and willingness to work hard in school.
- Pupils fully respect staff and others and friendly relationships are seen throughout the school day. Pupils are considerate of each other in lessons and often join in cheery discussion with staff in corridors and on their way to school every morning.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent in and outside lessons, despite the high level of social, emotional and behavioural needs of the pupils. This was seen after an energetic horse-riding lesson where the pupils came back to school and quickly settled into normal lessons.
- Parents and pupils feel that the school keeps them safe. One parent said, 'This is the most perfect school for my daughter. Everyone is friendly and the teachers are good because they all know what they are doing and provide extra support for my daughter. There are now no incidents of bad behaviour.' The regular anti-bullying sessions give pupils an excellent understanding of aggressive behaviour and what is harassment. This has minimised bullying in the school, which is rare and dealt with very effectively.
- The school has established excellent relationships with agencies, services, families and other schools to meet pupils' needs. This is seen in the high quality work of the parent-support adviser and in the high regard the local authority has for the way that the children in its care are taught and looked after in the school.
- The significant improvement in pupils' attitudes and the highly effective systems for encouraging regular attendance have made sure that pupils attend very well.

The leadership and management are good.

- The able headteacher is ensuring the school's good overall effectiveness and together with governors and staff she knows what needs to be done to make the school even more successful.
- Leaders' view of the school's performance is accurate and used well to make things even better. For example, steps taken to improve pupils' progress in reading are working well.
- The leadership team has a strong focus on teaching and learning. They have taken actions to improve the quality of teaching and make sure that what is learnt from checks on teachers' performance is used to determine what training staff should have.
- Pupils and staff feel they are valued in their school community. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination promptly. As a result, progress for all pupils is good and pupils feel equally valued.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and supported by rigorous checks and vetting, together with partnerships with professionals and families that work well.
- The new curriculum suits pupils and is designed to provide good opportunities to learn about different cultures, communities and religions through topics. Pupils meet and talk to authors who visit the school; they explore Aboriginal art and express themselves through dance. These are some of the exciting experiences the curriculum brings. However, currently the curriculum provides too limited opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their speaking skills and to widen their vocabulary. This and the fact that there is room for even further improvement in pupils' achievement and in teaching, is the reason why the overall quality of leadership and management is good rather than outstanding.
- The school has regular contact with the special school consortium for support but has no local authority contact for reporting on the school's performance to the governors. The local authority has a high regard for the quality of support the school provides to other schools that have pupils with social, emotional and behavioural problems.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors provide good support to the school and know its strengths and weaknesses. This is evident in their understanding of the progress made in improving attendance and the impact the new resources purchased for reading have made on pupils' skills. Governors hold the school to account in open and positive ways and their actions are having a beneficial impact on bringing about school improvement. Governors have helpful training and are knowledgeable about the use of performance management.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 111775 |
| Local authority | Middlesbrough |
| Inspection number | 405358 |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 64 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Sue Pattison |
| Headteacher | Mrs Jan Mather |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13-14 January 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01642 819157 |
| Fax number | 01642 829981 |
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