

Norfolk Park School

Park Grange Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S2 3QF

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

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		Good	2
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

- Not enough pupils are making the expected amount of progress or good progress in communication, literacy and numeracy.
- While teaching is improving and this is beginning to help pupils make better progress, there is not consistently good quality teaching across the school to ensure that by the time pupils leave, their achievement is good.
- The assessment of pupils' learning is often not carried out with sufficient rigour. As a result too many teachers are unable to plan lessons that meet pupils' needs and so help them to improve their skills in communication, literacy and numeracy.
- The pace of improvement has been slow because past checks on pupils' progress were inaccurate, so leaders and teachers did not have a clear picture of how well pupils achieved. Until recently, the checks on the quality of teaching did not point out well enough strengths and weaknesses.
- Most governors are new to their roles and although they are determined to challenge leaders and hold the school to account, it is too early for them to demonstrate the impact of their actions on school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher has refocused the school on its urgent priorities for improvement and they are driving forward this agenda relentlessly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants, aided by good therapy services, form effective teams caring for and supporting pupils effectively
- Pupils enjoy school and their experiences add much to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their behaviour is good and staff manage it well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons which involved nine of the school's 10 teachers. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined inspectors in observing four lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, representatives of governing body and the local authority.
- They scrutinised a wide range of documents held by the school including its self-evaluation, policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils, data on pupils' progress and a sample of their progress files.
- The inspectors took account of the views of eight parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Henry Moreton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Most pupils have a statement of special educational needs apart from those children on an assessment placement. The children fall into three main groups, the largest of which is pupils with severe learning difficulties followed by pupils with autism spectrum conditions and a smaller number of pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above average.
- The school provides for a small number of children who are of pre-nursery age. This provision is inspected separately and was last inspected in June 2012.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2012. The school is being supported through a partnership with another special school. A temporary deputy headteacher is seconded from that school until the substantive post holder returns. The school has links with other special schools in Sheffield and a network of mainstream schools in its locality.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring all teachers are skilled in assessing pupils' progress and keep detailed and accurate records of progress
 - making sure teachers use information from assessments to plan challenging work and targets for each pupil which ensure they develop their knowledge and skills systematically
 - further development of classroom equipment and resources, including information and communication technology, to support learning.
- Increase the effectiveness of the school's leadership by:
 - ensuring that leaders with particular responsibilities develop the expertise and confidence to bring about improvements in their areas
 - ensuring that leaders with particular responsibilities make regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and of pupils' work in their areas of responsibility.
- Ensure governors are effective at carrying out their roles and in holding the school to account by:
 - completing the necessary training to enable them to perform their duties well
 - rigorously examining information from the school about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
 - confirming that the school's plans for improvement are being tackled successfully, on time, within budget and are having good impact on the school's overall effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement and their rates of progress were not properly understood by leaders and teachers, a situation that has only recently improved so that all pupils now have better and more equal opportunities to achieve. Progress data collected in school has not provided an accurate picture so leaders and teachers know what action to take to promote pupils' learning and progress. Teachers have for some time been hindered from ensuring pupils' achievement is good or better.
- There is a lack of good classroom equipment and materials, especially for information and communication technology. This has limited the scope for pupils to make good progress. More recently the use of pupil-premium funding has started to remedy this situation in the recent drive to raise pupils' achievement.
- The lack of precision in planning pupils' next steps in learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy has meant that their progress over time has been uneven. Lesson planning is improving, helped significantly by grouping pupils according to their particular special educational needs. There are separate classes for pupils with severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum conditions and profound and multiple learning difficulties. As a result teachers' expertise is now better matched to pupils' needs and each group of pupils is benefitting from this change.
- Pupils are now beginning to make good progress in most lessons and this is making up for some lack of progress in previous years. Nursery and Reception Year children are rapidly improving a good range of essential skills and are better able to work by themselves in walking steadily, sitting well, eating and drinking and in communicating their choices. The positive encouragement of adults ensures that children stay actively involved in activities through which they remember daily routines, learn to use symbols, sign, develop language and play constructively with toys.
- Pupils with autism spectrum conditions are making good headway in listening to explanations and instructions. They settle well to work and sustain concentration on a task for good lengths of time. A small group of Key Stage 2 pupils independently sorted coins separating one penny and two pence coins or copper and silver, showing that they had been attentive when the teacher was showing them different coins.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are making good progress in lessons in showing an interest and in taking part in activities. Most watch and follow the movement of objects and listen to sounds. The more-able pupils reach out for objects, hold them and enjoy the opportunity to do so.
- Many pupils with severe learning difficulties use a good range of sign language to communicate and the few more-able attempt to articulate short sentences such as 'circle time is over'. Many sign the days of the week and, when shown a symbol, give the sign saying what it represents. Pupils become very familiar with some sign language but are not always stretched in lessons to develop their sign language skills further.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been good enough over time to ensure pupils achieve well. Over the past year the headteacher, with effective support from partners, has been relentless in improving the quality of teaching. As a result most teaching now has good features which are promoting pupils' learning and progress more effectively. However, in a small proportion of lessons, teaching still requires improvement.
- Teachers' checks on progress in lessons and their use of assessment information to plan future work for pupils have, in the past, been weak. This has meant learning has often been too piecemeal and progress has been uneven. Assessment practice is now improving with teachers setting targets, being clearer about the skills pupils already have and the ones they next need to

learn.

- Better assessment practice is now ensuring teachers and their assistants are better at meeting pupils' different needs. Staff are supported effectively by a good range of therapeutic services. Staff know pupils well and good relationships ensure behaviour is managed well and the conditions for learning are positive. Staff make sure pupils feel comfortable and secure, are clear about their daily routines and the timetable of work and activities. This is a particularly strong feature of teaching in the Nursery and Reception Year classrooms.
- In the few lessons where good assessment practice is not yet embedded, teaching lacks clear learning objectives, and activities are not planned well to ensure that all pupils learn what is intended. Records of pupils' work are not focused sharply on their progress: they record what pupils have done but not the impact of activities on learning and progress. Occasionally, teachers' expectations are not high enough in moving pupils on when they are ready to learn something new, such as new signs and more refined uses of signing.
- Where teaching is good, it confidently engages pupils, and lively approaches to learning create interest and enjoyment. Lessons proceed at a good pace and staff use humour well and good questioning to elicit pupils' responses. Different methods of communication are used effectively to develop pupils' skills with symbols and signing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils throughout school enjoy their daily experiences and develop a positive outlook on the wider world and by being with other pupils. They arrive each morning excited in anticipation of seeing people they know and like and with whom they feel safe.
- While many have difficulty in staying calm and being aware of the needs of others, the positive relationships with adults helps them to behave well. The close attention and good support provided by teachers and their assistants to all pupils ensures they remain aware of the expectations for good behaviour. They manage to keep to the school's high expectations and this fosters good relations.
- The management of behaviour has been strengthened through grouping pupils according to their particular special educational needs. This practice has enabled staff to adapt their approaches to suit different groups of pupils and has resulted in a calmer atmosphere across the school. Methods for promoting pupils' social and emotional development are improving and recent training is leading to a high degree of consistency in anticipating and responding positively to any challenging behaviour.
- Pupils are helped to be friendly towards each other and to share. Respect for each other is actively promoted throughout the day and celebrated in assemblies and personal, social and health education. This contributes significantly to pupils' understanding of the importance of good behaviour and having a regard for others, whatever their differences.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The new headteacher quickly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and what action was needed to improve the school and its effectiveness. She has set out key priorities for raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching. In pursuing her priorities she is being well supported by governors and the local authority. Staff are rising to the headteacher's high expectations.
- There has been good progress in improving the school premises with the substantial backing of the local authority. The headteacher has been relentless in improving teaching and in eliminating any judged to be inadequate. A combination of regular, robust checks and rigorous management of teachers' performance ensures every teacher has challenging targets to achieve. The headteacher has established a firm link between teachers' pay and the effectiveness of their

teaching. The expectations for those teachers on higher pay have been raised and they have been set clear leadership roles and responsibilities.

- The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's contributions to raising ambition and the drive for improvement are being strengthened by the development of a larger team of leaders. However, this widening of leadership roles is at an early stage and impact is limited in relation to improving assessment practices, implementing new curriculum plans and in making checks on the quality of teaching and of pupils' work.
- The local authority has been instrumental in establishing the link with another special school and in arranging for expertise and good practice to be shared. This has reinforced the headteacher's high expectations and given staff clear direction on improving their performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has changed significantly. There are now more governors and they are settling well into their new roles and responsibilities. They have arranged themselves into committees which are sharply focused on the key issues for the school, including the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and safeguarding, health and safety. The local authority has been a strong partner of the governors by ensuring they are suitably trained to carry out all of their responsibilities. Governors have studied closely the evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are clear on where precisely they need to hold the school to account, although their doing so is at an early stage. Governors play an effective role in managing the school's budget and are well informed about teachers' performance management and decisions on their pay. They have received a comprehensive report from the headteacher on how the pupil premium is being spent although governors have yet to see a detailed evaluation of what positive impact this spending has had on pupils' achievement.

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	107177
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	408911

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hannah Boneham
Headteacher	Jane Vickers
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2009
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