

Thomas Bewick School

Linthorpe Road, West Denton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE5 2LW

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

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|---|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 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 |
| Overall effectiveness of the residential experience | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of pupils make good progress in their learning in English and mathematics, and particularly in communication. Some pupils make outstanding progress.
- Children who are on roll here but attend the Early Years Foundation Stage in settings elsewhere make good progress.
- The sixth form is outstanding. All students leave school with a nationally accredited qualification.
- The majority of teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Consistent approaches help pupils to develop independence and they learn to manage their own good behaviour.
- The revised leadership and management, led by a new headteacher, are continuing to drive improvements well in the school.
- Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Pupils enjoy, and are happy with, their residential experience.
- Provision, management and the overall effectiveness of residential care are good. The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in a small number of lessons requires improvement because pupils do not make fast enough progress in them.
- Middle leaders are not fully involved in improving the quality of teaching.
- The anti-bullying policy for the residential provision does not yet include information about homophobic and cyber-bullying.

Information about this inspection

- This was an integrated inspection with one social care inspector who judged the quality of the school's residential provision. Joint working arrangements took place throughout between the inspection teams and the school staff. The findings of the residential inspection are included in this report.
- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. Joint learning walks were made with a member of the senior leadership team to review the two satellite locations for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Short visits to classrooms and other learning activities also took place.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior and middle leaders, groups of students and members of the governing body. The lead inspector held telephone calls with a representative of the local authority and with the school's improvement adviser.
- The social care inspector met with staff including the headteacher, the senior residential child-care officer and care staff. He spent time with students in residence and held discussions with parents, both face to face and on the telephone.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised by inspectors, including care plans, behaviour logs, pupil progress data, improvement planning and safeguarding documents.
- The inspectors took account of 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and those given by parents during an informal meeting held during the inspection. Inspectors also considered the 33 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Michele Crichton, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Janice Stephenson | Additional Inspector |
| Nicholas Murphy | Social Care Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a day and residential school for pupils aged from three to 19 years.
- All pupils are either undergoing a process of assessment for, or already have, a statement of special educational needs.
- The school caters for pupils with autism and pervasive developmental disorder.
- Pupils attend the school from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the surrounding area.
- There are currently nine pupils in the residential provision.
- The school offers residential provision for pupils during term time only, ranging from one to two nights per week.
- Approximately three quarters of the pupils are of White British heritage and the remaining pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Approximately one fifth of pupils are girls.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school currently accesses additional provision from Newcastle College on a weekly basis for a small number of students in Years 13 and 14.
- The school uses two satellite locations for the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage. One is Cruddas Park Early Years Centre where there are currently 6 children who are on roll at Thomas Bewick but educated here. The other is Walkergate Early Years Centre where there are currently 12 children who are on roll at Thomas Bewick but educated here.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher and a new Chair of the Governing Body have been appointed.
- The school is an Autism Education Trust training hub for the north-east region.
- From September 2013 plans are advanced for the school to become part of a trust with three other local special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4 is at least consistently good, and increase the amount that is outstanding, by ensuring that work is always well matched to all pupils' needs, regardless of their ability.
- Improve leadership and management by developing the role of middle leaders in accurately checking the quality of teaching.
- Develop further the good practice in residential provision by:
 - ensuring that all parts of the placement plan reflect each individual residential pupil's assessed needs
 - revising the anti-bullying policy to include homophobic and cyber-bullying
 - considering the integration of staff supervision and appraisal so that the senior residential care officer undertakes both.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils enter school with attainment levels that are significantly below those expected for their age due to the nature of their special educational needs.
- From their individual starting points pupils' progress in developing communication skills and in personal development is particularly good, and it is outstanding in the sixth form. This is because there is an emphasis on communication in every activity for pupils from the moment they enter the school through using signs, symbols, electronic equipment or developing speaking skills.
- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is good. Progress in reading is good because there is a focus on reading throughout the school. Younger pupils are taught how to link letters and sounds together and to read unknown words. Some older pupils combine their confidence and love of reading by independently taking a bus ride into Newcastle to buy books for themselves.
- Children achieve well in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage as tasks are tailored well to their individual needs. Outstanding achievement in the sixth form is a result of the exceptional teaching and strong alternative provision. Students enjoy learning together and working hard. This is shown by the fact that all students, regardless of ability, have acquired some form of accreditation to prepare them for their next stage in life or learning when they leave school.
- There is no difference in the attainment of different groups of pupils, such as the small numbers of girls and pupils from minority ethnic groups. Those who are known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium also make good and outstanding progress. This is due to the good-quality teaching, care, and additional support and therapies given to these pupils, as well as a strong commitment by staff to the promotion of equality of opportunity. Consequently, they are catching up other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Activities and strategies to encourage and improve communication are a key focus in all of the learning that takes place. Staff are persistent in expecting and receiving an appropriate response to questions or in discussions and they have high expectations of all pupils. Consequently, this ensures that pupils throughout the school make at least good and often outstanding progress in communication.
- Scrutiny of teachers' planning shows learning is prepared for each individual pupil and, consequently, staff know learners well. Teachers ensure that there is a supportive and friendly atmosphere within lessons.
- Some staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage show exceptionally high levels of expertise in teaching children with autism. For example, clearly established morning routines are cleverly woven with questions to develop early reading and mathematical skills. The quality of provision in the satellite locations as well as on the Thomas Bewick site is consistently sensitive to the needs of the individual children.
- Support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. They question pupils about their answers, listen to their reading and record their responses. Their consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour helps learning time to run smoothly.
- Reading is taught well, and there is a good focus on improving writing skills, starting with the youngest children who paint and match letter shapes. The teaching of mathematics is frequently practical, which also makes it more meaningful. For example, pupils have to work out how much it is going to cost them for their snacks at the Billy Buzz Café, whilst others learn about pattern and sequence in drama lessons.
- A variety of teaching methods are used to enable each individual to make their own best personal progress. For example, more-able pupils benefit from good levels of verbal challenge

from teachers and also from discussions that help them work out answers for themselves. Teaching strategies to engage those pupils with challenging behaviour are also effective, enabling them to stay in class, take turns with others and complete the work that is set.

- In the best lessons teachers plan enjoyable activities that develop a wide range of skills. There are very good relationships with pupils, strong staff teamwork, and the expertise of all staff is evident. In a small number of lessons teachers take too long to get to the actual point of the lesson or activities are not well matched to pupils' needs. When this happens, pupils' behaviour can deteriorate from its usually good standard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Each pupil is known as an individual and is cared for well by all the adults.
- There have never been any pupil exclusions in the history of the school.
- Comprehensive risk assessments, high staff supervision and consistent approaches ensure that pupils are safe.
- Pupils in school say they feel safe and that they can turn to any member of staff for help. They also say how much they enjoy school. This is shown in their attendance which is above average when compared with other special schools.
- The school's focus on developing independence is evident as pupils progress through the school. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage children are expected to tidy up and return things to their rightful place. The sixth-form students are expected to write and self-check information before presenting it to staff. In the residential provision pupils are encouraged to make their own beds, tidy up after themselves and attend to their own personal routines.
- Some pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour but this is helped by consistent management of pupils' behaviour by all members of staff. The impact of any less acceptable behaviour on other pupils' learning is kept to a minimum. Occasionally, learning activities are not well matched to pupils' needs. At these times, pupils are less engaged or become distracted during their learning and this slows their rate of progress.
- Behaviour within the residential provision is very good. Staff are skilled at using their knowledge of each residential pupil to manage difficult situations and promote good behaviour. As a result, restraint is hardly ever used and sanctions are unnecessary.
- Residential pupils feel safe. There is no bullying and they know who to go to if they have any worries or concerns, although there is no information about homophobic and cyber-bullying in the anti-bullying policy for the residential provision.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher took up her post in January 2013. Her previous role as deputy headteacher means that she knows the school well, which has enabled her to make perceptive changes. For example, there is now a revised senior leadership team and greater accountability for pupils' progress expected from all staff. The headteacher has a strong and strategic view for future school developments as the school becomes part of a trust in September 2013.
- The curriculum is a strength. It meets the needs of pupils well, provides them with interesting experiences and makes learning meaningful. For example, a recent African arts' week involved pupils making African art patterns in the sand using materials found on the beach at Longsands, Tynemouth. Writing and reading activities were also blended into activities and developed pupils' academic skills alongside creative ones.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. For example, pupils welcome a range of visitors into their school and enjoy trips, including short stays abroad, to Denmark, the Netherlands and Finland. Vocational and academic partnerships prepare older students well for their future life.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this school. Leaders and managers ensure

there is equality of opportunity and no discrimination within the school because each pupil's achievements are tracked individually. Close working partnerships with a range of agencies, including speech and language professionals and medical and social care agencies, ensure each pupil's personal needs are well met.

- Parents are very positive about the school. They speak highly of staff and the personal and individual approach given to each child. Responses on Parent View also show their great support for the school.
- Analysis of the school's development plan shows that all senior leaders and managers are accountable for improving learning and pupils' progress. There is also frequent checking of teaching and learning in order to raise the quality of teaching and any underperformance is met with focused actions for improvement. However, middle leaders are not given enough responsibility for also developing the quality of teaching in the school.
- The residential provision is very well managed. Roles and responsibilities are clear and the staff work very well as a team. Checks by senior staff are thorough, shortfalls are identified, and actions to rectify these are carried forward into the development plan. However, systems of staff supervision and appraisal are not integrated to allow the senior residential care officer to undertake both. Many, but not all, parts of the placement plan reflect each individual residential pupil's assessed needs. These areas for further improvement do not detract from the outstanding outcomes that pupils achieve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - A new Chair of the Governing Body has been in post since January 2013. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school. They are aware that a small amount of teaching requires improvement and understand that there is a link between the performance management of staff and the links to school improvement and pay progression. They ensure safeguarding is secure, and monitor spending and the impact of the pupil premium. Their wide range of skills means they are fully able to scrutinise data about pupils' progress and to challenge senior leaders. The governing body is fully supportive of the developments for September 2013 and joint governor meetings with all the Chairs of the different parts of the new trust have already taken place.

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| Outcomes for residential pupils | are outstanding |
| Quality of residential provision and care | is good |
| Residential pupils' safety | is good |
| Leadership and management of the residential provision | is good |

- The school meets all national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- The atmosphere within the residential provision is happy and harmonious. Pupils look forward to their stays with relish, and love spending time with their friends and staff. Residential pupils feel that they have a real voice in what happens when they come to stay.
- Staff have excellent relationships with residential pupils. They treat them with respect and are sensitive to what makes each pupil different and unique.
- The impact of the residential provision upon the development of pupils is substantial. Residential pupils make outstanding progress in acquiring the practical skills they need to become as independent as possible. Consequently, residential pupils have made significant improvements in their emotional resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- The residential provision promotes healthy lifestyles. Staff are successful in encouraging residential pupils to take more responsibility for their own well-being. There are good links with health services, which ensure that more-complex health needs are addressed effectively and safely.
- The induction process for pupils moving into the residential provision is very well planned. This

contributes to the successful outcomes that all residential pupils achieve. Similarly, staff are very effective in managing the transition of residential pupils into adult services.

- Residential staff work closely with colleagues in the school, thus ensuring continuity of planning. This aids the achievement of targets for each individual residential pupil and helps them achieve to the maximum of their potential.
- Staff promote the welfare of residential pupils and ensure their progress through the use of very detailed, comprehensive care plans. Staff involve residential pupils as far as possible in reviewing and amending their plans. This helps residential pupils to understand and celebrate the progress they make.

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> |

| Boarding/Residential provision | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Grade 3 | Adequate | A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses. |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 131988 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC041902 |
| Local authority | Newcastle Upon Tyne |
| Inspection number | 402527 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 3–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 126 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 12 |
| Number of boarders on roll | 9 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Adam Green |
| Headteacher | Diane Scott |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 December 2009 |
| Telephone number | 0191 2296020 |
| Fax number | 0191 2296021 |
| Email address | admin@thomasbewick.newcastle.sch.uk |

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