

# Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia

Netherwitton, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 4PB

## Inspection dates

12–13 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia is a good school. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds make good progress. They often make outstanding progress in their literacy skills.
- Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Pupils benefit from personalised lessons which challenge them. Some teaching is outstanding because teachers encourage pupils to inspire each other through working creatively and sharing their knowledge.
- The sixth form is good. The subjects that students follow prepare them well for life after school and potential employment.
- The most able students are offered course choices that help them reach their potential. Opportunities to attend specialist classes locally provide invaluable skills and experience.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. Senior leaders and governors have improved many aspects of the school's performance since its last inspection.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good and this is demonstrated during lessons and when pupils participate in activities around the school. Relationships with staff are excellent thanks to a caring supportive environment. Pupils say they feel safe and happy in a friendly school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils, including those in boarding provision, enjoy the many visits and events outside of school where they utilise their social and communication skills.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough of the teaching is outstanding. Marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
- The governing body does not provide enough challenge to raise both the quality of teaching and achievement across the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by seven teachers. In addition, the inspector, with the headteacher, made a number of short visits to lessons to check the quality of questioning and look at the quality of work in pupils' books.
- The inspector also met four pupils to talk about their work and experience of the school.
- The inspector had discussions with senior leaders, teachers, parents and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspection looked at the work of the school, including pupils' behaviour, and analysed documentation in relation to attendance, safeguarding, pupils' work, self-evaluation and the school's system for checking on pupils' progress.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to help plan the inspection. The inspector met two parents during the school day and reviewed the school's parental survey.

## Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia is a non-maintained special school in Northumberland. It is a specialist school that provides individualised programmes of learning and support to pupils aged between nine and 18 who have specific learning difficulties and dyslexia. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There is an increasing number of pupils with an autistic spectrum condition.
- Pupils attend from across the country and the school has boarding provision currently for 13 residential pupils.
- The majority of pupils are boys. Pupils enter the school at various points across key stages.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is very low. This is extra government funding based on the numbers entitled to free school meals, pupils in care of the local authority and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The large majority of pupils are from a White British heritage.
- The school had a social care inspection on 3 December 2013 for its residential provision. This report is available on the Ofsted website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and further improve pupils' achievement through using marking consistently to give pupils a clear understanding of how to improve their learning.
- Strengthen further the quality of leadership and management by using governors' views on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress to set new priorities.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Taking into account their different starting points, all pupils, including those in boarding provision, make good progress and achieve well, whatever their individual special educational needs or circumstances.
- Good teaching, a personalised approach and the highly effective relationships with staff ensure pupils achieve well across subjects. For almost all pupils there is substantial improvement in their attitudes, aspirations, self-esteem and motivation to learn.
- A significant minority of pupils make excellent progress in English and mathematics. For the vast majority of pupils, gaps in their knowledge and skills are narrowed quickly. This includes those eligible for pupil-premium funding. Teachers set these pupils highly challenging targets and check their achievement well.
- The most able learners achieve well because they engage well with subjects they chose to follow. They achieve high grades, particularly in photography and art.
- Sixth-form students make good progress. They follow courses of study which are relevant to their needs and aptitudes. They gain a range of national qualifications appropriate to their individual starting points and skills, which improve their self-confidence to apply their knowledge in real situations such as college and work-experience placements.
- The staff are exceptionally well trained in literacy. They provide enjoyable structured activities to develop reading skills through daily reading sessions across the school. This helps pupils to re-engage with reading and leads to good and occasionally outstanding progress in improving reading skills, often in a short period of time.
- Numeracy is promoted well across the school. The majority of pupils achieve GCSE awards and they are given good opportunities to apply these skills in everyday situations.
- The school does not receive catch-up Year 7 funding. There is no early entry policy for GCSE examinations.
- The pupils excitedly talk about their work in lessons, a sign of how much they are enjoying their learning. They are rightly proud of their photography and art work, which they produce to a very high standard.
- Two parents commented that their children were re-engaging with their education and were keen to share their view with the inspector, 'My children are having a very happy experience and progressing well, although they have complex needs. They are more confident in who they are.'

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- The overall quality of teaching across the school is good. The majority of teaching is stimulating and motivates pupils well so that they are keen to learn and enjoy lessons.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, lessons are well planned and resources are carefully prepared to make lessons imaginative and interesting. In a highly engaging sixth-form photography lesson, all students made outstanding progress in their learning because their projects inspired them to direct their own learning through experimentation and sharing of ideas.
- A broad range of interesting subjects capture pupils' interests well and provide readiness to practise new skills. For example, one pupil making a puppet in design technology commented, 'I know exactly what I want to do next, a dragon. I'm really pleased with the puppet I just made.' In an English lesson a pupil shared with the teacher, 'I feel as if I have given you so many characteristics of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth on the whiteboard. My best word was persuasive.'
- Teachers give clear feedback to pupils during lessons to develop skills of literacy and numeracy. However, marking of pupils' work does not always offer pupils clear advice about what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and an excellent understanding of how pupils' special

educational needs affect their learning. For example, teachers support pupils who are very anxious to answer questions by encouragement and building upon the previously acquired knowledge to enhance understanding further. One parent explained, 'To have a child that was withdrawn, hated school, could not perform, did not achieve, that now has confidence, ability and a love of life is fantastic and all down to the help and support.'

- The majority of teaching is illustrated by high academic expectations for all pupils and of their good behaviour. Pupils say their teachers challenge them to work hard. One pupil told the inspector, 'I love my picture. I'm ambitious now. I want an A in my GCSE Art and an A at A level too. I've found my project so interesting.'

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

**are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils are confident and show good attitudes to their learning. They want to do well.
- Pupils generally work hard. Many pupils have had difficult experiences at other schools and arrive with low self-esteem and a reluctance to work. The caring, supportive induction to school, together with the respect and caring attitudes of staff, means they quickly engage in their lessons. In discussions, parents, staff and pupils speak positively about the good standard of behaviour in school.
- During their time in school most pupils make good gains in their personal development. They are keen to socialise, leading to excellent relationships being forged with adults and other children. Their raised self-esteem makes them more secure in participating in visits away from the school, so that they can learn more about the world and how others live and work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Teachers are mindful that many pupils have difficulties in organising themselves for lessons. As pupils progress through school, teachers expect pupils to be more independent: they help them to develop skills to be better prepared for their lessons. For example, highly effective project work gets them to prepare, plan and meet deadlines.
- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is good. Conversations with pupils reveal that they feel safe and well looked after. Like their parents, they do not see bullying as an issue. Pupils speak confidently about how staff are always on hand to help them if they have a worry or upset. They demonstrate a good grasp of how to avoid risk and danger. One parent commented, 'The school offers a safe, enriching environment for children and young people who otherwise become excluded and lost.'
- The school attendance is in line with similar provisions. Effective relationships with families and agencies have improved attendance well. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

### **The leadership and management**

**are good**

- The headteacher and her leadership team, together with the governing body, are ambitious and have created a warm supportive learning environment for all pupils. They have been successful in sustaining the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements over time.
- The school has good systems for checking the performance of teachers and providing effective training for them. Many have gained additional qualifications to support school improvements further.
- School leaders' clear and explicit belief that every child should make as much academic progress as possible is reflected in the bespoke and personalised approaches taken to planning the curriculum. The range of subjects and experiences offered to pupils meets their diverse needs well and promotes their effective learning and personal development. Pupils are able to gain GCSE-level qualifications and older students can progress to A level or entry level courses.
- Students are prepared for life after school through very engaging work-experience placements and college courses.

- Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The relevant, exciting and highly engaging curriculum supports this well. Support for pupils' personal, social and emotional development and their health education is exceptional. Staff work extremely well with pupils to have a very good understanding of their own and others' needs.
- Pupils, parents, staff and partner schools feel they are highly valued by the school community. The school's ethos is inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity very well and tackles discrimination promptly. As one parent indicated, 'This is a unique and very special school. It offers the specialised, caring, individual education the children need. It helps them deal with their difficulties.'
- Safeguarding meets requirements with much effective practice, including those occasions when pupils and students are off site, thus strengthening the good care and support for pupils and their families.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is effective. It makes a good contribution to leadership through both support and challenge. Governors have a good variety of expertise and have received suitable training to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively. All safeguarding aspects meet current requirements. They check the quality of teaching and understand the essential links between the quality of learning and attendance for all groups of pupils. They have provided their views of teaching and learning. However, their feedback is not focused enough to ensure it has a real impact on improvements in teaching and learning. They manage finance efficiently; they use the very small amount of funding for pupil premium with other funding to provide individualised programmes. The committee has been instrumental and purposeful in working with other local authorities to negotiate appropriate post-16 funding to match provision and needs.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122390
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	430916

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	31
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	4
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Trevelyan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Hodgson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 772685
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<b>Email address</b>	secretary@nunnykirk.co.uk



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