

Norfolk Park School

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

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The newly-formed senior leadership team are proving themselves to be highly effective in evaluating how well the school is doing and in setting clear targets and action plans to move the school forward.
- As a result of the calm and well-considered actions they have taken, they have made sure that teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is now always at least good and sometimes it is outstanding.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and plan work to match their very different needs. Activities are practical and provide sensory experiences to help pupils to learn effectively.
- Due to the good teaching, all groups of pupils make good progress from usually very low starting points and achieve well.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are cared for very well and this helps them to settle and be ready to learn.
- Pupils love to come to school and enjoy warm relationships with staff. They become confident learners and behave very well in class.
- Parents know their children are safe and well looked after while they are in school.
- The governing body has been strengthened. It has taken effective action to make sure the school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always plan activities to extend the learning, especially of the most-able pupils throughout a whole session. Pupils are not always as clear as they might be about what they are expected to learn.
- Learning in the outdoor spaces is not always as sharply focused as it is in the classroom.
- Different systems for recording pupil progress have been trialled and data is not yet fully in place to set challenging targets and record progress over time.
- Senior and middle leaders are new to their posts and have not yet fully developed their skills and experience.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all nine classes and observed parts of lessons taught in each class by nine different teachers.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, governors, a representative from the local authority and the National Leader of Education from Fusion Teaching School Alliance, who is supporting the school's current new leaders.
- There were insufficient responses on Parent View, the Ofsted on-line questionnaire, to be able to take them into account, but the inspector spoke separately with individual parents who came into school during the inspection. The responses on the school's own questionnaire were also looked at.
- The views of staff were gathered through the 36 questionnaires they returned, together with four student/volunteer response forms.
- The inspector spoke informally with pupils around the school and looked at examples of their work and photographic evidence of their achievements. The inspector looked at the school's records of pupils' current and recent progress, at the senior leaders' recent evaluation of the school's work and the resulting development planning. Documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour management, attendance, development of information and communication technology, curriculum planning were also seen.

Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Norfolk Park is a special school for pupils with special educational needs relating to profound, complex and severe learning difficulties. Many pupils have combinations of learning difficulties and disabilities and a minority have autism spectrum conditions. Some pupils have life-limiting conditions.
- All pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding (those known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is also about twice the national average. A majority of the pupils in the school have communication difficulties and use augmentative systems such as switches, sign and symbols.
- The majority of pupils start in Early Years Foundation Stage, but others join the school at later stages.
- There have been a number of changes of staff since the previous inspection, particularly in the senior leadership team. They are being supported by Rowan School, Fusion Teaching School Alliance, whose headteacher is a National Leader of Education (NLE). This role is to be strengthened in September when the NLE will become interim headteacher.
- Four new classroom teachers have been appointed for September 2014.
- A new school build is planned for completion in September 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupil achievement further by making sure that:
 - as far as possible, pupils understand what they are expected to learn in each session
 - activities are planned to sustain learning and challenge each pupil, especially the most able, throughout each session in order to build on their learning more quickly
 - learning in the outdoor spaces is clearly linked to the teaching in classrooms.
- Leadership and management, including the governing body, should continue with the rapid strides already made by:
 - further building experience and skills of leaders at all levels
 - consolidating the information gathered on pupil achievements so that it clearly demonstrates progress over time and enables challenging targets to be set for all pupils, especially the most able
 - ensuring that all parties, especially parents, staff and pupils are involved in planning for the move to a new build.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Pupils' folders show evidence of a wide range of activities which support their different needs very well. The folders show lively examples of pupils' good and sometimes outstanding progress towards the targets set for them.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a very good start. Staff develop warm and supportive relationships with the children and their parents so that the children settle quickly and begin to make good progress in their learning and in their personal and social development.
- Supporting agencies such as nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy and speech and language therapy are involved with the children from the start, so that their physical, medical and communication needs are understood and met exceptionally well. Together with staff in the classrooms they work as very effective teams to ensure that children are able and ready to learn.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in learning to communicate their needs and wishes because staff use communication systems, especially sign and symbols consistently. Those pupils who need them are provided with other augmentative forms of communication, such as switches and eye-gaze technology.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics according to their ability and in comparison with pupils in similar schools. The most-able pupils are able to recognise letters and sounds and use them in their writing in sand or on boards or paper. They enjoy sharing stories and often take books home to share with parents.
- In a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson the most-able pupils could identify and name different shapes. Those of lower ability enjoyed finding shapes in shredded paper while others made robot pictures by matching shapes to outlines.
- Activities are generally appropriately short, so that the majority of pupils are able to sustain their interest and make progress towards their targets. Occasionally, further activities on the topic are not planned to fill the whole session in order to extend the learning and challenge pupils to learn more quickly, especially the most able.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and those from minority ethnic groups make at least as good progress as others and often their progress is better. All groups of pupils are given an equal opportunity to succeed. Additional funding is used very well to provide extra staffing support, to develop enhanced individual access to information and communication technology and to ensure that eligible pupils are able to attend trips and out-of-school experiences.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, because action has been taken to deal with teaching which was less than good. Professional development of staff is always what is most needed to meet the learning needs of pupils and as a result, an increasing amount of teaching is now outstanding.
- Teaching usually challenges all pupils well with activities and tasks clearly linked to pupils' individual targets. Occasionally it is not always so clear to pupils what they are expected to learn in a lesson. Praise is used well to encourage pupils to do more, but sometimes the focus of the learning is not carried on throughout the lesson.
- Overall, however, planning supports individual pupil progress well, because teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to assess carefully what each pupil has learned on a day-to-day basis and set their next small step targets to ensure that pupils are moving forwards with their learning. Staff share a good knowledge of how each pupil learns best in order to plan work which will interest and engage each of them.
- Topics in the curriculum have been recently reviewed to make sure they are relevant to pupils,

but are also broadening their horizons. In a school which is some considerable distance from the coast, lessons are prepared to provide pupils with sensory experiences such as the sound and spray of the sea and real objects such as sand, buckets and spades and an opportunity to make sandcastles. Some pupils will make a trip to the seaside to check it out in real life. During the inspection most classes were also following the preparations for the Tour de France to come through the city and pupils enjoyed making bunting while watching and singing along to the video soundtrack for the event.

- Teaching makes good use of the outdoor spaces which most classes are able to access directly from classrooms. However, resources are not always well-focused on the same learning as in the classroom.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage develops children's early learning skills well. They begin to learn to make choices, to share, take turns and follow adult instructions. The emphasis in their programmes is on good development of early communication skills, learning to explore objects and interact with others, for example at snack times.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Teaching staff ensure that pupils understand each other's cultures, with one class having recently done a project on the Thai festival of Songkran.
- Teaching assistants make a huge contribution to pupils' learning. They successfully build trust so that pupils will concentrate for them. They share in the planning so that they know what the learning intentions are for each pupil and can provide good support for them to reach their targets. They reinforce the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics in all sessions wherever possible, for instance by counting and singing 'backwards and forwards' in time to the motion of an adapted swing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Those pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour get much better at it over time.
- All staff are trained in positive behaviour management techniques and consistent approaches to managing behaviour means that there are rarely interruptions to learning. Rewards and the very occasional need for consequences are chosen to meet the individual understanding of pupils.
- Parents report that their children love coming to school and are disappointed when it is holiday time. They enjoy attending the Stay and Play sessions with their brothers and sisters during the summer holidays.
- The school has become more outward looking recently and pupils are beginning to enjoy links with other schools through sport and by joining in a Magna dance event with other schools in the city. This helps to develop good social skills and pupils practise using these when they visit the café in Norfolk Park which they go to regularly, independently ordering drinks and snacks. They learn to behave in social situations, such as riding into the city on public transport to visit the Christmas market.
- The school has developed close links with Sheffield Wednesday Football Club and uses some of the primary sport funding to buy in weekly sports sessions from them. This has enabled pupils to try new sports. During the inspection both pupils and staff were participating in a fitness challenge to stretch their skills and endurance further.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Systems to safeguard pupils are securely in place and parents are very confident their children will be looked after well. There have been no incidents of bullying or racism identified in the recent past and pupils trust adults to deal with any issues promptly. Social times emphasise the importance of friendship and kindness to others.
- Pupils are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe as far as possible, with Crucial Crew providing a personal safety course for Year 6 pupils. Parents have been offered workshops on e-safety.
- Attendance is below the national average for primary schools, largely due to the medical

conditions of a minority of pupils which keep them absent from school, sometimes for long periods of time. Wherever possible and if the child is well enough, the school will send work home for them to do while absent. Attendance is in line with that of other similar schools.

The leadership and management are good

- There have been significant changes in the senior leadership team since the previous inspection and since the last monitoring inspection visit earlier this year. In their questionnaire responses, many staff expressed their confidence in the current leadership team and there has been a significant reduction in staff absence so that pupils are now able to enjoy more consistency of staffing.
- The leadership team has acted swiftly since the last monitoring visit to follow up on the points raised. They have re-evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the school and drawn up a sharply-focused action plan with clear measures to be sure actions are having the desired impact on school improvement. Governors are ensuring that these actions are monitored closely and leaders are not afraid to seek advice and support from specialists, such as Investors in People and from other schools.
- Action has been taken since the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching. Formal and informal observations and checks on teachers' planning and pupil work identify areas for improvement and are built into performance management meetings.
- Senior leaders have greatly benefited from recent support from staff at The Rowan School and the planned continuity of this support should ensure that the school continues to improve. Senior and middle leaders are new in post and benefit from shared experience to develop their skills and expertise in their new roles and responsibilities further.
- The local authority has supported the school through a period of change but, due to the actions of a strengthened governing body and the partnership with The Rowan School, feels that the school is in a secure enough position for it to now step back.
- Good actions have been taken to identify the best systems to measure the small steps of progress which pupils make and to ensure that challenging targets are set but the chosen systems are not yet well-established to show progress over time.
- Partnerships with other schools have been re-established. Pupils are able to enjoy visits to and from mainstream and other special schools and staff are able to share best practice and to moderate assessments of pupils' work.
- Partnerships with parents and with health care, social care and other agencies are very strong. Together they support pupils' total needs, so that they can learn as well as possible. Parents said that they know they can always approach staff in the school if they need advice or help at home and the school will work with them to resolve problems.
- The curriculum is under review to ensure that it meets the needs of the different groups of pupils. As well as the work on the World Cup and Tour de France this term, the school is planning further themed weeks in the new academic year, inviting parents to join their children in school to share information about how they learn and behave.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - New governors have been recruited to broaden skills and knowledge and this is supporting existing governors to develop their understanding of the role. The governing body has requested the local authority to be involved in recruiting members to strengthen it further. Governors challenge the school's leaders well, but too few of the current governors are able to make visits into school to check on its work at first hand.
 - Governors have ensured that financial difficulties are handled appropriately. They know how additional funding into the school is spent and the impact it is having. They have ensured that changes to staffing contracts have been managed sensitively and that any pay awards are for high quality performance. Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively and ensure that the school is a safe place. They are currently working with the local authority planners and senior leaders on plans for a new school build.

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	442246

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Thomas Carroll
Headteacher	Jane Vickers
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2013
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