

Hollybank School

Roe Head, Far Common Road, Mirfield, West Yorkshire, WF14 0DQ

Inspection dates 21–22 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils progress exceptionally well. They are very well prepared for the next step in their life.
- Pupils make consistently good and often outstanding progress in personal and social development. They are able to do this because they make outstanding progress in their communication skills.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students make outstanding progress here because they spend an increasing amount of time using and applying their skills in adult situations.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have excellent knowledge and expert skills and know the needs of their pupils very well. As a result, pupils are inspired by, and highly engaged in, their learning.
- At times pupils do not make quite as much progress in their personal skills because residential staff do not work closely with school staff when planning activities to enable pupils to achieve personal targets.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are inquisitive and very welcoming and show they feel safe in school. They are cared for very well.
- The school is expertly led and managed by the headteacher. There is a highly successful and shared vision of the pursuit of excellent teaching, care and high standards in all the school's work.
- The governing body and trustee directors hold leaders to account stringently and challenge rigorously, as well as support the school. They evaluate expertly the performance of the school, including teaching and achievement, care and every individual within it.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed several lessons and one-to-one sessions with members of staff. Two lessons and individual sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' individual learning and behaviour plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, a member of the governing body, members of the teaching staff and the chief executive of the Trust.
- The inspector took into account 12 questionnaires from staff. There were nine responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, records of the school's checks on pupils' and teachers' performance, safeguarding and attendance documents, minutes of meetings of the governing body and school policies.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith	Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
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Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have profound complex physical, sensory, communication, learning and medical needs.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils are admitted to the school at any age, and at any time during the year, although the majority join the school in Year 8.
- Pupils are admitted from any local authority in England and internationally. The majority of pupils live on site. A few pupils travel on a daily basis from neighbouring authorities.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school is located on a large site. It forms part of Hollybank Trust, which is a charity. The Trust includes a children's home and other residential provision for adults.
- The headteacher is a member of the local authority special school headteachers' group and a member of staff is providing support for a neighbouring special school in multi-sensory impairment.
- The school provides a toddler group for local families five mornings each week. This is a parent support service for families with children aged nought to five who have complex needs.
- The headteacher was appointed as permanent headteacher in September 2014, having previously been deputy headteacher and then acting headteacher since January 2014.
- Secondary age pupils do not access any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement even further by working more closely with residential staff to support their planning of activities enabling pupils to achieve personal targets.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is a highly effective and respected leader. She is very well supported by an effective governing body and senior teacher. One of the keys to success is the outstanding way in which everyone communicates with each other, applies policies consistently to create a harmonious and happy learning environment. The school is also at the heart of the wider community of the Trust.
- As there is a very small number of teachers, they all have responsibilities as middle leaders. They are acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They provide good support to each other and ensure smooth transitions for pupils to the next stage in their life.
- Leaders use data meticulously to analyse the very small steps of progress made by individual pupils. Teachers are acutely aware of the importance of what data are showing and they are able to use these extremely well to track pupils' progress, as part of measuring their performance and planning the next stages of learning for pupils.
- Monitoring of teaching is very effective because it is sharply focused on pupils' achievement. School leaders use the observation of pupils' progress in lessons and data exceptionally well to set targets for teachers and continually improve teaching practice. Training for staff is focused sharply on the needs of the pupils. For example, a member of staff has undertaken training at an advanced level in multi-sensory impairment.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils very well. It is well planned with a sharp focus on communication and thinking skills, as well as personal skills. As a result, pupils are inspired and engaged and very well prepared for the next step in their lives. It provides a good balance between education and pupils' medical and therapeutic needs.
- The curriculum is extensively enriched by music, sport, outdoor learning and visits. These opportunities form the basis for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is well planned with a sharp focus on reading, writing, mathematics and communication. As a result, pupils are inspired and engaged and very well prepared for the next step in their education and life in modern Britain.
- Partnership with parents is exceptional and parents use phrases such as 'fabulous' and 'pupils are always doing something, never just left' when they describe the work of the school. Parents and pupils are made fully aware of the options available to them well in advance of leaving the school. As a result, they are able to make the best decisions for future placement.
- The parent support service is very effective in supporting parents to understand the special ways in which they can help their children to achieve.
- The Trust is committed to providing external experts to develop the work of the school even further. It values highly the school's leadership and is aware that the school's performance is enhanced by the partnership work with the local authority and neighbouring schools undertaken by the headteacher and specialist teacher.
- The school has just received its first allocation of primary school sports funding and so it is too early to judge its impact.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body, whose members include representatives who themselves are experts in health and safeguarding, makes an extremely positive contribution to the school's success. Governors monitor the work of the school and its data and report back to the trust board extremely well. They ensure every pupil is given an equal opportunity to succeed. They have up-to-date knowledge of pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching and provide sufficient challenge to the school to move it forward. The trust ensures financial resources are well managed, including the school's use of additional government funding to support pupils, such as the pupil premium, and are aware of its impact.
 - Governors, the Chief Executive Officer and an external consultant are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and they are also fully aware that teachers' pay awards are securely linked to the progress that pupils make. They ensure that all safeguarding procedures are fully met and, as a result, pupils are safe at school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are very welcoming and show they are happy to come to this school by, for example, smiling when they approach the front door.
- Greeting everyone as they arrive is a priority and this sets the atmosphere which is characterised by the respect everyone extends to each other at all times. Later, pupils welcome everyone again in classrooms, often through singing welcomes and replies.
- Pupils are exceptionally well motivated. They behave very well in lessons and rise to the high expectations set by staff. For example, they will persevere when following instructions to reach a little further. They can manage this because staff encourage and prompt understanding exceptionally well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons and throughout the school are exceptional overall. Outstanding behaviour characterises many lessons. Pupils listen carefully to each other, and other adults, and persevere when they are faced with challenges. They know that, on the rare occasions when they choose not to comply with a request, they will not be awarded one of the stars which lead to further rewards later in the week.
- Pupils learn to take increasing control of their environment. Staff are well trained in how to manage behaviour. Strong relationships with pupils mean that pupils show confidently that there is always someone to communicate with if necessary. Pupils with additional impulsive behavioural needs make excellent progress over time in learning to control their behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils are aware of the different risks posed when they are out in the community or when going sailing.
- Records show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are very rare. Any incidents which involve physical intervention are dealt with effectively and quickly by staff. Any incidents are recorded in detail and monitored meticulously and action is taken as a result.
- All policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.
- Governors are vigilant in ensuring that full checks on the safety of premises are regularly undertaken and acted upon.
- Attendance is above average because pupils attend whenever they can. The extensive provision of health staff means that pupils missing school due to medical appointments are kept to an absolute minimum.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and is often outstanding. Teaching helps pupils to learn and achieve exceptionally well during their time at the school. Teachers have expert knowledge in the teaching of pupils with profound learning needs.
- Teachers and all staff are very skilled in communication techniques such as signing, the use of symbols, and the ways in which objects or photographs can be used to aid understanding.
- Extensive use is made of assistive technology, which is special equipment such as personalised switches, used to overcome the difficulties pupils have with everyday life. These are always kept in good order with clear instructions about the angle they must be attached to the wheelchair and how the pupil will operate them. Often, operating the switch allows the pupil to say something to the rest of the class which gives pupils tremendous satisfaction.
- Teachers have very high expectations of prompt starts to lessons as well as the sensitive balance of work to be completed by pupils in a given time. Pupils meet these expectations well because they enjoy their learning.
- A particular strength in teaching is how well and how promptly pupils' understanding is checked as the lesson proceeds and also the skill with which staff observe pupils to ascertain their knowledge. These features make a notably positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning.
- Teachers and all staff are committed and dedicated to the pupils and, as such, have excellent relationships with them. These result in a very positive climate for learning in all lessons.
- The skills of teaching assistants are considerable and targeted well to support individuals in their personalised learning to ensure they make excellent progress. This personalised approach addresses pupils' learning needs very precisely.

- Feedback is very effective. It ensures that all pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve and it is very effective in accelerating the progress pupils make.
- The most able pupils are always challenged to reach the highest levels or deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, symbols to represent increasingly complex ideas, which staff explain and describe are carefully prepared. Pupils then respond to questions by pointing with their eyes to a place on a board which allows them to finely grade their answers. Staff then deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding by further skilful questioning.
- Staff reflect on the quality of their teaching alongside other staff. As a result, teaching is improving continuously and pupils learn and achieve outstandingly well during their time at the school.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All pupils are working below the levels expected nationally when they enter the school as a result of their disabilities and special educational needs. They make outstanding progress throughout the school from these starting points.
- Pupils make consistently good and often outstanding progress in personal and social development. They are able to do this because they make outstanding progress in the development of their communication skills. This is as a result of the excellent training and provision for speech and language therapy.
- Occasionally, progress in personal skills is not quite as rapid as it could be because work with residential staff does not always result in learning activities which complement each other closely.
- Pupils with the most profound medical needs achieve very well because they are able to spend as much time in school as possible. This is because their health needs are met very well within the school. Parents are confident that this is the case.
- Pupils with multi-sensory impairments make outstanding progress because their needs are met very well under the guidance of the specially trained teacher. This includes the use of both light and dark sensory rooms.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make the same excellent rate of progress as non-disadvantaged peers. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls or in any particular subject.
- Pupils make excellent progress overall in literacy and numeracy, as a result of the way they are encouraged to use assistive technology to respond to questions and demonstrate their understanding.
- The most able pupils achieve high levels of attainment relative to their individual needs. In 2014, two pupils achieved levels of attainment which only pupils with higher starting points would be expected to achieve.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Most students continue into the sixth form and also continue into post-19 provision within the trust.
- Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress because they develop their skills further through using and applying them in a wide range of adult situations, such as cooking meals and visiting shopping malls.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. They always try exceptionally hard to meet the expectations of the staff.
- Teaching is outstanding. Students enjoy expressing their choices and views. For example, when they examine the different collections of leaves and flowers, they enjoy colours and textures and the beauty of how fuchsia flowers move.
- Excellent transition procedures on entry to the sixth form ensure students settle quickly. These procedures include working for a small part of their timetable with the older students before they join.
- Transition to post-19 provision is excellent. Again, the same procedures allow students to integrate slowly into their new situation, as well as experience the world of work in the second-hand clothes recycling centre.
- The sixth form provision is well led and managed by a knowledgeable and creative member of staff. All safety and welfare requirements are met very well. As a result, students are settled, secure and confident. Teamwork is a considerable strength and this has a significant impact on students' excellent 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	107796
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	447932

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judy Moorhouse
Headteacher	Ailsa Moore
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2012
Telephone number	01924 490833
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