

Mossbrook School

Bochum Parkway, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S8 8JR

Inspection dates

27–28 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils in all key stages make good progress over time. As they travel through the school, pupils are supported to achieve their best. Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are high and as a result, pupils often reach their potential.
- Staff are experienced and highly trained in different aspects of special needs or specialist subjects. This, along with good levels of care ensures that pupils, including those with complex difficulties, achieve well from their starting points.
- Support staff are a strength of the school. They are well trained and focus continuously on pupils' well-being, personal development and academic achievement.
- The Reception class provides children with a warm, welcoming environment. They make good progress as they learn about routines, acceptable behaviour and how to get on with each other.
- Pupils enjoy swimming and sports activities and are engaged and, because their progress here is tracked, motivated to achieve well in this area.
- The headteacher's leadership is effective. He ensures that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum are becoming embedded across each key stage. His determination results in a strategic approach for as much success as possible for all pupils. He has a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The deputy headteacher ensures that pupils' progress is tracked very carefully. Pupils are supported well by senior and middle leaders who have a range of diverse skills. Together, leaders ensure that teaching and pupils' achievement continue to improve.
- Governors have a clear understanding of how the school is doing compared to the national picture. They are supportive of the school and also challenge leaders to improve relevant aspects of provision.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes are positive in all key stages. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure that all pupils are safe and that all safeguarding requirements are met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils make rapid progress in their speaking, language and communication development because their individual targets are not always planned well. Sometimes, the tasks they are given do not engage them fully.
- Some pupils in early years do not have direct access to outdoor provision and when they do, these opportunities are not always planned well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in many lessons involving different teachers. The majority of observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or with the deputy headteacher. Walks around the school were conducted and learning was observed in different key stages with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or the early years leader. An inspector listened to pupils from Years 2 and 5 read. Inspectors observed support for pupils in whole-class sessions and with individual pupils.
- Inspectors looked in detail at the work in pupils' books, files and online from across the school. Two meetings were held with groups of pupils where they talked about their work and their perceptions of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff and different groups of pupils. They interviewed members of the governing body and spoke to staff from the local authority speech therapy department.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's summary of its view of its own performance; the school development plan; policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding; information about pupils' attendance and behaviour; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; information about pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- There were 27 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and inspectors also looked at summaries of school parental questionnaires. They also took account of the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mossbrook School caters for pupils with communication difficulties and autism. Some pupils' special needs range from moderate to profound learning difficulties and many have multiple learning difficulties. 75% have autistic spectrum conditions, often in combination with other learning difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school is a special school with a residential unit for 84 boys and girls aged from four to 11 years. Around 15 pupils choose to stay one night a week at the residential accommodation, between Monday to Thursday. The residential provision is linked to the main school premises. Usually, four to five pupils stay on each night. The residential provision was inspected with a full social care inspection in October 2014 and its overall effectiveness was judged as good. Entry to the unit is through a social care referral.
- The school is situated on the outskirts of south Sheffield and pupils are transported in from the city.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school is in an informal federation with nine other special schools within the Sheffield area. The headteacher is the chair of this group of special schools. The headteacher is now in his fifth term at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a whole-school communication strategy for all pupils so that their progress in speaking, communication and language development is even more rapid by:
 - ensuring that pupils' individual learning targets are always used to plan appropriate tasks for all pupils in and out of class
 - ensuring that the curriculum provides more exciting and engaging opportunities so that every pupil makes more rapid progress, especially in their speaking and communication skills
 - further developing the Reception class outdoor area provision, in order to ensure that pupils have easier access to high quality activities based closely on their individual learning targets, especially in speech and language development.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. His continuous drive and ambition to provide a high quality of education for all pupils are impressive. The deputy headteacher supports the vision very well. The senior leadership team continuously look for ways to improve the school's work. The school is well placed to maintain and improve on the higher standards reached at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- The quality of teaching is checked frequently and, as a result, has improved consistently throughout the school and across all key stages. Senior leaders look at lesson plans, the lessons taught and the pupils' progress in their work and their learning journeys. Some different forms of technology are used to enhance communication with different software programmes. This often results in positive engagement and allows pupils to improve their work, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders ensure that the check on pupils' work takes many different forms, depending on pupils' individual special need.
- Leaders and managers at all levels constantly pursue improvement in all they do. There is a drive to improve all aspects of the school provision and outcomes. Some pupils achieve beyond all expectations, due to effective leadership systems and management processes. For example; with the correct support from the school, pupils perform during assemblies for parents or take part in Christmas plays.
- Leaders try to ensure that pupils take part in worthwhile, well-planned experiences with meaningful outcomes and opportunities to follow their interests. For example, they are involved in learning French, art, drama, music or food technology. However, the curriculum on occasions does not always totally engage all learners, especially with speech, communication and language development. Sometimes the tasks they are given are not linked to their individual learning targets.
- Leaders strive to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are taught to be reflective in the dining hall, to be resilient in their food technology tasks and to use reasoning in their mathematical development, especially when they have to solve challenging problems, with calculations up to a hundred.
- The management of teachers' performance through setting targets linked to pupils' achievement is well organised and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The pupils with complex needs and learning difficulties still have challenging targets to achieve, in order to ensure that their progress is consistently good.
- Leaders' checks on the school's performance ensure that they have an excellent understanding of what is working well and what requires further attention. Plans to make improvements are discussed regularly at senior leadership team meetings. The checks they make on pupils' progress are becoming more effective and are helping to raise attainment and to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The work of middle leaders is developing well. They are starting to ensure that there is much that enriches the curriculum. They have ensured that progress has been made from the previous inspection, especially in the provision for English and mathematics within other subject areas.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and leaders and managers are committed to fostering good relations and to tackling discrimination in all its forms. Leaders ensure that positive relationships are established with different partnerships and particularly with parents and outside agencies. Work with parents and partnerships is good, as communication is strong, and opportunities for advice and support are fully in place.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding pupils are comprehensive and meet requirements fully.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this school. The school works with a number of local special schools in the authority. The authority and outside agencies continue to seek places at the school because of successes in the past with other pupils. The headteacher works very closely with other providers to share some leadership and management practice of the school. The school is held in high regard by the local authority and often supports pupils and staff in other settings.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well and uses all the information and data about pupils' progress effectively to compare the school's performance with that of similar schools locally and nationally. Governors provide support and challenge for improvement. The school is increasing in popularity and is very well thought of in the local community.
 - Governors know the quality of teaching in the school. They know the importance of focused school performance management and its link to pay progression and they make sure that teachers only receive financial reward if their pupils meet their achievement targets. They also ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively and leads to the good achievement in all subjects of pupils supported by it.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitude to their work is good and this makes a positive contribution to their good progress, especially higher up the school. Teaching challenges and interests them and pupils know how to improve their work. However, sometimes they are not always as engaged as they could be and this slows the pace of their learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements. A typical comment from a parent is, 'I am so proud of my son's achievements, considering his starting point. This school has taught him so many things about behaviour, safety and how to get on with other people.' Overall, pupils agree that the school is helping them to improve their academic achievement, behaviour and social well-being.
- There is a behaviour policy that pupils know about and follow. Pupils are clear about what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. Adults are good role models for pupils, particularly in relation to attitudes and manners. Playtime supervision is good as pupils feel safe and they know that they have an adult to go to if they need any help or assistance.
- When asked what is special about the school, pupils say, 'The staff. We enjoy coming to school because of them. They help us to do our work.'
- Pupils are generally polite and well mannered to each other, to staff and to visitors. They help and support each other well in the dining room. They reflect during prayer time and then listen, as a whole-school community, to music, which helps them relax.
- Pupils are well behaved on the school buses as they are transported from home to school and back again. Transportation is well ordered, supervised extremely well and ensures a calm approach to the beginning and end of the school day. Pupils enjoy the travel, believing it to be a pleasurable experience.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There are many aspects of this work which are good, for example the individual health care plans and meetings which ensure that all staff have an accurate overview of individual pupils, to ensure that they are kept safe and well. Speech therapy by well-trained staff allows pupils to communicate better and this makes them feel safe and secure.
- Pupils are able to recognise the difference between bullying and falling out. They inform inspectors that bullying very rarely occurs and when it does, staff are vigilant. Pupils are confident about approaching adults in school if they need help to resolve any issue. Aspects such as learning about different types of bullying are planned for exceptionally well in assemblies, in lessons and in therapy sessions.
- Pupils always know how to ask for help from staff. Some pupils work closely with different support staff, therapists or mentors to achieve the best that they can. The school has various programmes to support pupils if they are underachieving. This work, for example in art, physical education, swimming, music, and drama, is effective. However, activities to promote pupils' speaking and communication skills to ensure that they all feel totally safe in and out of school are underdeveloped. In addition, pupils are not always instructed to tidy up after themselves.
- Attendance issues are addressed very quickly. Compared to similar schools, the attendance is above average over time. Staff have regular contact with parents and this establishes good attendance at school. The school has effectively impressed upon parents the need for their children to attend school regularly and this has paid dividends. Pupils enjoy coming to school as they want to learn more. They realise the need for good attendance and enjoy the rewards they receive when they come to school regularly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of the quality of the teaching over time is good. Teaching is good because the tasks given to pupils build very clearly on what they already know and can do and meet pupils' varying needs and abilities well on a daily basis. There are a few occasions when pupils are given tasks that are not appropriate or not linked to their individual targets and when this happens learning slows.
- Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are often high. For example, pupils are expected to solve mathematical problems showing the correct working out, step by step, with numbers to a hundred. They are moved on expertly as soon as they need more challenge, especially higher up the school.
- The teaching in English is improving; expectations are often high, especially in reading. Work often meets the needs of the pupils because they are motivated and engaged by their tasks. However, pupils' speech and communication development is not rapid enough. Sometimes, pupils' individual targets are not linked well to the different tasks provided for them in class and this can slow down their learning. Marking across the different subjects and classes is regular and informative, helping pupils to improve their work.

- The teaching of mathematics is stronger throughout the school because of well-matched provision, particularly for the most able and the higher-functioning pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. They are provided with activities and challenges that stretch their mathematical thinking skills effectively. Some pupils are involved in relevant practical mathematical activities, such as counting elephants in a number line. A range of practical or software activities engages pupils at an appropriate level to ensure that they make good progress, depending on their special need.
- There have been improvements in the teaching of phonics (the linking of letters and the sounds that they make.) These have had a positive impact on standards in reading across the school. Pupils, particularly the most able pupils are always challenged with their reading tasks and enjoy the range of material on offer in the classrooms. Some pupils are good at learning their high-frequency words and this supports them with their reading tasks very well indeed.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and have the necessary skills to support pupils in English and mathematics. They are important and crucial in building important relationships with the pupils. They are also kept well informed of what pupils are expected to learn and so progress is good. Pupils appreciate the valuable input of the support staff, which enables them to make good progress in both their academic and personal development.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils in all key stages achieve well. Pupils' progress is good overall in reading, writing and mathematics, considering their low starting points. However, pupils' progress in speech, communication and language development is not as rapid as it could be because there is not a whole-school system in place to promote pupils' progress in these areas. All pupils spoken to during the inspection said they enjoyed their lessons.
- Pupils' efforts in lessons and individual group work ensure that they make good progress and help them to catch up when they fall behind. In swimming lessons, for example, younger pupils were engaged and motivated to complete their tasks in the hydro pool. They knew exactly what it was that they had to achieve during the lesson and over time. Their efforts were recorded so that the assessment of pupils' progress was instant. This kept them on task and ensured that their progress was rapid. Similarly, in science, pupils were totally engaged and involved in testing out which clothing was waterproof. They enjoyed the activities and achieved well as they made rapid progress with well-thought-out purposeful tasks. Pupils are often involved in working out themselves how well they are doing and this results in improvements in their writing skills in particular.
- Achievement in reading is good. Pupils can talk about how they follow their own interests with their different books. Pupils make significant progress with their reading skills during their time at the school, considering their needs and starting points, as a result of effective teaching and support. School books are used well to encourage a love of reading. Those who find reading difficult are supported well to make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to follow their interests when choosing their own reading material.
- Achievement in mathematics is good. Pupils are able to solve simple mathematical problems. They can gather relevant information and work well together by discussing the different ways to accomplish a set task and, as a result, they learn at a good rate.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is usually below average. However, all pupils make at least good progress, and some make outstanding progress. Many pupils are ready for their secondary school placement as transition arrangements are effective. A typical comment from a parent is, 'I never thought my child with all his very special needs would achieve so much at this school. He has performed in assembly in front of the whole school. His transition to secondary school was seamless and he has gained confidence so much from all that he has learnt at Mossbrook.'
- There is very little difference between the performances of different groups of pupils. The numbers of pupils in each group are so small that an analysis to compare their performance does not generate particularly meaningful statistics. However, inspection evidence along with pupils' work confirms that all groups of pupils are making at least good progress and sometimes outstanding progress. For example; disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils achieve equally well.
- At the school the most able pupils make excellent progress as their work often provides an extra level of challenge, so that they are stretched and achieve their full potential in all subject areas.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter the early years in the Reception class with skills that are significantly below those typically

seen in children of this age. They make good progress during their time in the early years because they are supported well, especially in acquiring skills to engage with adults or classmates. When they leave the Reception class, they enter Year 1 used to following routines and instructions. This often means they are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

- Teaching is organised well and provides a calm atmosphere, so children feel safe and secure. Relationships are positive and conducive to good progress for all the children. Teaching ensures that learning is enjoyable and that the activities provided generally meet children's varying needs and abilities. For example, they enjoy learning about the letters and the sounds that they make, dressing up to go outside, or playing with a football.'
- There is a strong emphasis placed on developing children's social skills and their readiness for learning before they enter Year 1. Sometimes children do not clear up after themselves both inside and outside. Their individual targets are generally planned for well, but this is not always the case. Children generally follow instructions from adults carefully and behave well.
- Good leadership and management ensure that provision in the early years is good. However, leaders are aware that outdoor provision and access to it are underdeveloped for some of these younger children, particularly in relation to activities to promote their speech and language development. The staff ensure that the partnerships with parents are strong. Parents agree that the early years provision is good.

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	107182
Social care unique reference number	SC003048
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	453776

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Irving Smith
Headteacher	Dean Linkhorn
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2012
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