

# Holgate Meadows Special School

Lindsay Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S5 7WE

## Inspection dates

1–2 November 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher provides good leadership and direction within the school. Together with a small team of senior leaders and teachers, he has brought about improvements in the teaching of mathematics since the last inspection.
- As a result of good care and support, pupils settle quickly to learning and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils re-engage with learning in response to good-quality teaching.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and make lessons interesting and engaging.
- Pupils develop very good attitudes to learning. They listen, ask relevant questions and are developing the skills to sustain concentration.
- The vast majority of pupils make up ground swiftly, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' understanding of the world of work, careers information, advice and guidance is not developed well and early enough in the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in response to consistent approaches and well-established routines.
- A small number of pupils have made commendable gains in attendance this term. However, many pupils are not attending school consistently and attendance is improving too slowly.
- The dedicated staff team works effectively together to put pupils' learning needs, safety and welfare first. Pupils are happy, well supported and feel safe at school.
- The development of staff leadership skills and responsibilities for evaluating the impact of the school's recent work are not firmly established.
- Leaders know how well pupils and different groups are achieving but do not always present regular information and updates to governors.
- The chair of the governing body knows what is needed for the school to continue to improve. He is starting to readjust the focus of governance which had begun to swing too much towards establishing new structures rather than pupils' needs.

## Full report

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

- Develop strategic leadership and governance by:
  - developing leadership widely across the school and sharing clear expectations of leaders
  - ensuring that all leaders provide regular information and updates to enable governors to take informed decisions about the impact of the school's work and the value for money of pupil premium funding
  - making sure that governors remain focused on pupils' progress and outcomes.
- Improve attendance and ensure that high expectations of pupils attending regularly and consistently are firmly established in order to give them the best chances of achieving their potential.
- Increase pupils' employability skills, their knowledge of the world of work and their understanding of the opportunities available to them.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher ensures that pupils' needs and learning remain at the heart of this school. Governors, staff and pupils support his vision for the school and a culture of respect and tolerance is well embedded.
- Effective and regular checks on the quality of teaching by senior leaders have helped to ensure that new systems of assessment, changes to the curriculum and approaches to managing behaviour have been implemented consistently since the last inspection.
- Teachers know that they will be supported to improve their skills through focused professional development. Performance management systems and regular appraisals are embedded throughout the school.
- Training and support are currently being used well within staff teams to establish a whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics. The sharing of best practice, ideas and resources is helping to improve the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is rising swiftly so that achievement matches that in English.
- Leadership is not firmly distributed throughout the school. A very small number of staff who are responsible for aspects of the school's work have a sharp and detailed knowledge of the difference the school is making to each individual pupil. However, not all staff are aware of their responsibilities to use this information in more strategic ways. Consequently, information and data about attendance, behaviour and the learning and progress of different groups are not always drawn together in order to support thorough and incisive school self-evaluation.
- The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests. The latest review ensured a better balance of science, geography and history in key stage 4, and resulted in more pupils studying for qualifications in a broad range of academic and vocational courses.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developing appropriately in response to carefully planned experiences, visits and visitors. Pupils' knowledge about democracy, the rule of law and good citizenship is developing well through regular discussion and debate in tutor time and assemblies.
- Access to careers advice and guidance, and opportunities to undertake responsibilities, are not taking place early or thoroughly enough to enable pupils to develop good employability skills.
- Parents told inspectors that they value the wider school curriculum and can see the difference the school makes to their children even in a short time. Their views were echoed by pupils who responded to the inspection survey and those who spoke to inspectors in school.

## Governance of the school

- The governing body has been in transition over the last 12 months. During this period, governors were not quite as focused as they should have been in all areas. Consequently, the importance of pupils and their outcomes took a back seat to the challenges governors responded to in establishing a trust and a single body to oversee two schools. The current governing body, many members of which are new to the school, is starting to move forward with more certainty and stability under the new chair of the governing body. He is ambitious for pupils and wants to see them achieve the best they can. He has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is clear where step-change is needed. A more rigorous and strategic approach to school improvement is emerging.
- Governors have managed the budget well. Information is beginning to be shared more systematically. Reports on the achievement and progress of pupils who are benefiting from pupil premium and external funding are starting to be drawn up.
- Actions are beginning to be taken to replace outdated information on the school website so that parents know what applies to their children and can use it more effectively.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and governors are trained in safer recruitment, and they take proper measures to ensure that adults appointed to posts are suitable to work with children and young people. Staff have been trained and they know what to do when they have concerns about any child. Key staff, such as the designated safeguarding officer and members of the school's inclusion team, have been trained to a greater level. They are diligent in their duties. Good liaison with statutory healthcare, social care and police services ensures that pupils and families who need early help are identified and supported.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching is typically good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and communicate well with pupils through explanation, modelling and discussion to re-ignite their interest in learning.
- The use of assessment is well developed. Teachers use what they know about pupils' interests and needs to plan work that challenges and encourages pupils to develop confidence as learners.
- Pupils benefit from adults' consistent approach to managing behaviour. They skilfully minimise interruptions to learning, knowing when to use a quiet word to individuals and when more emotional support is needed. This enables pupils to concentrate and participate fully. In this regard, support staff are well deployed and highly effective.
- Teachers and support staff have worked hard to improve the teaching of mathematics. Throughout the school, pupils are developing a secure understanding of basic principles and concepts. Where teaching and learning are at their best, teachers skilfully demonstrate and explain processes to pupils to deepen their understanding.

- Pupils are responding well in mathematics lessons. In their books and in lessons, pupils are seen to persevere with tasks. They are interested and keen to challenge themselves and to demonstrate their learning.
- Teachers' questioning is used effectively and sensitively in most lessons to encourage and help pupils to consolidate and apply their learning. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, questioning prompted pupils to reflect and remember a particular passage in 'Of Mice and Men'. Pupils were successfully challenged to summarise and develop their answers about Curley's wife, for example, 'His wife is isolated, stuck in incarceration'.
- Opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning, to read aloud, and apply different writing styles and techniques are given appropriate emphasis in some subjects such as art, science and geography. This makes a good contribution to developing their literacy skills.
- Occasionally, the reading and writing requirements for pupils in some subjects are not adapted in line with their literacy levels or abilities. Some tasks provide few opportunities for pupils to practise and build their writing skills.
- Support staff provide effective literacy and numeracy support for some pupils with additional needs and those who need to catch up on learning they may have missed. As a result, pupils are acquiring a secure grasp of letters and sounds to support their reading, and calculation and number facts to aid their numeracy development. Pupils are becoming more confident learners as a result of the skills and understanding of the staff involved.
- Teachers and support staff ensure that they follow agreed policies, for example in the marking of work and in providing feedback to pupils. Pupils' successes are shared frequently with parents and the school's regular contact ensures that any concerns are quickly identified at an early stage.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are happy and engaged in lessons and most are developing positive attitudes to learning.
- Staff work hard to build pupils' confidence and self-respect. Pupils say that teachers encourage them to be friendly to other pupils and treat others equally. Assemblies and social and residential activities are playing a key role in helping pupils to learn the importance of respecting others from different backgrounds and to be mindful of their feelings.
- The school's inclusion team works effectively to coordinate tuition and provide additional support to disadvantaged pupils, and those who are educated off site and with alternative providers. Effective work with external agencies and social care, healthcare and police services ensures that individual pupils' welfare and emotional healthcare needs are met.

- Pupils are encouraged to look after their physical and emotional health and many choose to participate in clubs and activities such as sports, art and music. For example, at breaktimes, younger pupils get vigorous exercise playing tag with staff in play areas, while older pupils sometimes run, cycle or walk circuits on the specially developed walkways.
- Few opportunities exist for pupils to systematically and progressively develop their understanding of work and to learn the skills they need to be successful in their studies and careers. Pupils are not provided with adequate and early careers information, advice and guidance.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour around school is calm, friendly and good natured and the school is a quiet and orderly place.
- Conduct in lessons is good. Most pupils actively participate in lessons. They listen, ask relevant questions and raise their hands to answer questions.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils. They communicate these clearly, and consistently encourage pupils to display positive behaviours throughout the school day. Pupils know what is expected of them. Routines are well established and this contributes well to helping some pupils to manage their own behaviour.
- Fixed-term exclusions have reduced since the last inspection as pupils are taking increasing responsibility for their behaviour or responding to alternative strategies.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Those who have arrived recently settle well and quickly in school. They say that bullying happens sometimes and that staff are quick to resolve it. The instances of bullying and racial harassment are low. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using social media, and are learning how to make positive choices.
- A number of pupils across the school have maintained 100% attendance records. Attendance overall is improving slowly but remains below the national average. Recent strategies to tackle low attendance in Year 11 have yet to have a substantial impact. Leaders check that pupils who attend alternative provision arrive on time, are kept safe and behave well.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Pupils join the school at different ages and most have experienced difficulties in their learning, behaviour and attendance. From their starting points, pupils make good progress.
- New procedures for assessing pupils' work, together with more challenging targets, have been quickly embedded throughout the school in the last year. Information about pupils' progress is analysed carefully. This information indicates that most pupils are making at least expected progress and sometimes better than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- In key stage 2, younger pupils are making swift progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Gaps in learning are better identified and effective teaching is enabling these pupils to develop basic skills quickly in these subjects.

- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are interested in their work and responding to the revised curriculum and higher expectations of their teachers. Frequent checks on learning and the school's finely graded approach to assessment are capturing the small steps they are making in English, mathematics and science.
- Evidence from lessons and books shows that in each key stage, pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding are developing quickly. Pupils recall rules and are delighted when they learn how to use formulae or apply new skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and most become competent readers who can explain what they are reading. Emerging readers are increasingly confident to read aloud in class in response to the additional support they receive.
- The most able readers have a wide range of reading interests. However, some pupils would like more advice and direction to help them seek out challenging and adventurous book choices.
- There are no marked differences, generally, between the outcomes of boys and girls, or of those who do and do not benefit from pupil premium funding. However, the school has identified a group of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 who are not making progress as quickly as their peers in school or attending regularly. Leaders are taking action to tackle this and initiatives are under way.
- Pupils who study at alternative provision are making gains in their learning and achieving vocational and study skills. Pupils receiving inclusion support, due to a range of complex needs, are making slow and steady progress in English and mathematics towards very specific learning targets.
- In 2016, all Year 11 pupils gained qualifications in English and mathematics. The number of pupils who continue on to college or apprenticeships is increasing. However, fewer pupils sustain their places than do so nationally.

## School details

Unique reference number	126712
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10001347

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Toner
Headteacher	Tony Middleton
Telephone number	01142 456 305
Website	<a href="http://www.holgatemcs.co.uk">www.holgatemcs.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@holgatemcs.sheffield.sch.uk">enquiries@holgatemcs.sheffield.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 October 2012

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about governors or pupil premium on its website.
- Holgate Meadows caters for pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many pupils enter the school after interrupted education in mainstream schools.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. A small number of pupils undertake assessment for a plan.
- The school has expanded and has begun to take girls in the last two years. There are more boys than girls on roll.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.



- There are 20 pupils who attend the following alternative providers for part of the week: My Life Project; Decat; Sheaf Training; On Board and Sheffield Wednesday.
- Tutors and key workers from the school's inclusion team provide teaching and support to 12 vulnerable pupils, who are unable to get to school, at home or in local community facilities.
- The school also runs two off-site facilities that provide an alternative learning environment for a small number of Holgate Meadows pupils and pupils of other local schools.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has formed a federated trust with Heritage Park School. A joint governing body is responsible for both schools.
- The executive headteacher of Holgate Meadows has overall responsibility for both schools. He has also supported Sheffield Inclusion Centre Pupil Referral Unit through its exit from special measures.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook a series of short visits to classrooms to sample the learning as well as longer lesson observations to observe the quality of teaching and learning in action. Some observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books and files. They listened to pupils read and spoke with them about their work. Around one quarter of pupils completed an online survey and gave their views to inspectors about teaching, learning and school life.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and staff. They met with governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to keeping children safe, pupils' progress information, governors' records of meetings, and school improvement planning, including plans for mathematics and pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors scrutinised the 22 survey responses completed by school staff.
- Four parents replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and three parents met with inspectors.

## Inspection team

Gina White, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Ward

Ofsted Inspector

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