

# Mossbrook School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107182
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	324544
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kath Halifax

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Boarding provision</b>	
<b>Social care URN</b>	
<b>Social care inspector</b>	Debbie Foster

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	79
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr E Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Brough
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324544

**Date of previous childcare inspection**  
**School address**

Not previously inspected  
Bochum Parkway  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
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**Telephone number**  
**Fax number**

**Age group** 4-11

**Inspection dates** 2-3 March 2009

**Inspection number** 324544

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector and a Social Care Inspector.

## Description of the school

This school is a specialist provision for primary-aged pupils with autism, or with severe learning difficulties. Since the last inspection, the range of additional needs has become more complex and now includes pupils with greater medical needs. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. At one third, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing. Though most are from South East Asia, others are from Caribbean, African and Yemini backgrounds, or of mixed heritage. All speak English as their main language. A very small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. Five children are educated in the Early Years Foundation Stage. One quarter of the pupils stay one night each week in the residential unit, which is known as Mosshouse. The school has achieved Investors in People status, the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the Basic Skills Primary Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school with an outstanding boarding facility, both of which provide excellent value for money. The considerable impact of the school's work extends beyond those on roll to pupils in other schools, locally, regionally and nationally, through the professional advice for staff working with those with autism, and those with communication needs. This work is one element in the school's outstanding success in promoting community cohesion. Comments such as 'my son is doing so well and doing things we never thought possible' and 'this very special school is very supportive of children and their parents' are representative of parents' high opinion of the school.

The school has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection. The headteacher continues to provide inspirational leadership and management. This has been strengthened by the appointment of a deputy headteacher who is an expert in the education of pupils with autism and an assistant headteacher who is a leading teacher in the local authority for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Together they make a formidable team whose knowledge and determination are instrumental in driving the school forward. Leaders are very successful in meeting their aim of creating a school that is 'proud to be special; committed to excellence'.

As a result, the provision is outstanding so, while standards are low because of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils of all ages and capabilities make exceptional progress in their work and in their personal development.

From a very low starting point on entering the Reception class, children make exceptional progress in all areas of learning because of the excellent provision. For example, they make outstanding gains in the very important areas of communication and social development. Their remarkable achievement continues in Years 1 to 6 because of first-rate teaching. Teachers are imaginative in the activities they provide, going the extra mile to find ways to key the most challenging pupils into learning, for example, through the use of digital animation. Assessment is very good. A wealth of information has been collected to keep a check on pupils' progress. The information is used very well by both teachers and leaders, for example, to check that all groups of pupils achieve equally well in every subject. However, leaders do not analyse the information about how well different groups meet the targets in their individual education plans as closely as data from other assessments.

All adults at the school manage pupils extremely well and have exceedingly high expectations of those pupils with very severe and complex needs. Furthermore, a rich, exciting and relevant curriculum caters extremely well for all pupils of all capabilities. Activities in the residence help pupils to achieve maximum independence through building their confidence and helping them to cope with change.

Pupils receive excellent care, support and guidance. Links with numerous health professionals and other agencies contribute considerably to their well-being. This is enhanced by innovative work between the school and hospitals that provides medical staff with, for example, social stories, symbols and visual timetables to make the pupils' visits less fearful, especially where an overnight stay or anaesthetic is necessary. Pupils' personal development is exceptional both in school and in the residence. All adults at the school and the residence are excellent role models and encourage pupils to recognise each other's worth and to care for their classmates, regardless of background or need. Attendance is good. Most absences are when pupils are too ill to attend. The pupils are very keen to attend this school where every child is treated as truly

special and unique. With the expertise and enthusiasm of staff, the school has outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's communication and personal development are at the heart of all activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children gain confidence and independence from the moment they enter the classroom, for example, by putting their coats in boxes and finding their name. The children flourish and make astonishing progress in this exciting environment. Though the levels children attain are considerably below average because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, their achievement is excellent. This is because teaching is of an extremely high standard and allows children to learn through their senses, which makes learning meaningful. There is a very good balance between adult-directed and child-led activities. Where appropriate, a structured approach is used for children with autism. Children respond exceedingly well to all that is on offer. During whole-class work, they gain a feeling of belonging to a group, such as when singing a range of number songs with gusto. They choose happily between activities inside and out. The accommodation provides considerable flexibility for all aspects of the curriculum. While the outdoor area is used well to support all areas of learning, plans are well advanced to upgrade the area. Management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent with the leader providing training and support for other schools locally and nationally. Children's well-being is of prime importance and all legal requirements are met.

## **Effectiveness of boarding provision**

### **Grade: 1**

The boarding provision is outstanding. The promotion of equality and diversity within the residence is excellent. Pupils enjoy extremely positive relationships with the staff team, based on mutual trust and respect. Parents have total confidence that their children are well cared for in every respect. They report that their children benefit tremendously from the provision by having the opportunity to meet with others of the same age and to develop social and independence skills. Pupils say how much they enjoy visiting Mosshouse. The leadership and management of the residence are excellent. The recent appointment of a senior childcare officer has strengthened the team considerably. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The statement of purpose has been reviewed and now meets requirements. Similarly, a suitable policy for dealing with a child missing without authority is now in place. An independent consultant checks the residence each half term to ensure it is up to standard and reports to the governors in writing. The number of staff achieving the required National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 now exceeds the national target. While leaders have done much to make the accommodation more homely, their plans to improve the bathroom have been held back awaiting the completion of structural work.

The arrangements to ensure pupils' safety are outstanding, as are those for their continuing good health. Reviews continue to take place for all pupils, ensuring their progress is monitored and built upon. Individual health needs are identified and information is kept up to date. Pupils benefit from written plans, which set out how the staff will meet their assessed needs. Most of the essential information is recorded but, while the staff are aware of individual personal care needs, these are not always recorded. Nevertheless, the staff have a very good understanding of a wide range of needs and are at pains to ensure pupils' well-being is central to the work of the residence. Immediate access to a range of health professionals contributes

further to pupils' well-being. Detailed policies, procedures and practices are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication. Effective training in the safe handling and administration of medication, first-aid, and on specialist medical interventions contribute considerably to pupils' continued safety and health. Pupils appreciate the care they receive and the nutritious, well-balanced meals which take account of their medical and cultural diets. They are thrilled when their choice appears on the menu and are willing to try new dishes.

The staff have high regard for the dignity of pupils, ensuring privacy for personal care is upheld at all times. A highly effective consultation process ensures pupils' views are heard and that their suggestions and decisions are valued. Confidentiality is maintained at all times and suitable systems are in place to record and tackle any complaints from pupils or parents. Through rigorous training, the arrangements to safeguard pupils are known to all the staff. The staff are vigilant in caring for pupils and any concerns are addressed without delay. Fire procedures have been fully implemented. An in-depth assessment of potential risks has been undertaken for all aspects of residential care. The majority are reviewed and dated, however, this is not always the case. A striking feature of the residence is the continuity of approach between the educational and care aspects of provision. This is strengthened by having staff working in both settings. Behaviour is managed consistently, rewards and sanctions are the same in the residence as in school and the same code of conduct for pupils is upheld.

Pupils' enjoyment and achievement in Mosshouse is outstanding, as is their contribution to the community. All look forward tremendously to their special 'sleeping' night and view it as home from home. Social skills are extremely well promoted as pupils make decisions and choices, for example, through using pictures and symbols when planning their evening activities. While watching DVDs is a firm favourite, pupils are active for much of the evening, riding tricycles and playing football. The overnight stay contributes considerably to pupils' achievements, particularly through work on individual targets and, for example, alphabet bingo and bedtime reading. Pupils are proud of the stickers and certificates they receive and are bursting to show them to their classmates the following day. Parents comment that their children are much more independent since attending Mosshouse, especially in their personal hygiene, packing for an overnight stay and in socialising.

Both inspectors are clear the boarding provision makes a considerable contribution to pupils' life out of school. However, the accommodation affects the social care judgement in this aspect. The house is decorated and furnished to a good standard in most areas. This creates a pleasant, homely environment that is appropriate to pupils' age and culture, but while pupils' bedrooms are functional, some are showing signs of wear and tear, as is one bathroom. The judgement that pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being in the boarding provision differs from the judgement of 'outstanding' for the school because social care inspectors use additional factors.

The organisation of the residence is outstanding. Mosshouse provides a safe setting for young people with complex needs and a positive and a supportive learning environment. The care staff team are child-centred, committed and professional. The number of staff on duty is sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils and there have been very few staff changes. The headteacher and deputy at the school work closely with care staff, keeping an eye on the progress of all the pupils through random checks and attending all reviews, but not all of their monitoring activity is recorded.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse even more precisely information on the progress groups of pupils make towards the targets in their individual education plans.
- Ensure that the National Minimum Standards currently not met, as detailed below, are met.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care.

- Ensure all risk assessments are dated and reviewed (NMS26).
- Ensure care plans include information on personal care (NMS17).
- Continue to improve the environment including bathrooms and bedrooms (NMS 24 and 25).
- Formally record when monitoring checks are undertaken (NMS 32).

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Taking account of their starting points and learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils make exceptional progress. Achievement and progress in the important areas of speaking and listening is accelerated because these elements form the basis of every activity both in school and in the residence. Pupils with communication needs are fully included in all activities. They use signs, symbols and a picture exchange system very effectively to contribute to lessons and make their needs known. Similarly, gains in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils are extremely good because teachers use every opportunity to extend these skills in all subjects. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are of an equal standard. For example, pupils were delighted to share their favourite places with their classmates through computer picture presentations. Achievements in sport in school and at local and regional events are outstanding. Likewise, higher attaining pupils achieve especially well in French, winning first prize in a modern foreign language competition at Sheffield University.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' shining eyes and smiling expectant faces are indicative of the pleasure they gain from their education. Their sheer enjoyment was evident, for example, when a group of pupils with complex needs ventured onto the playground to increase their understanding of distance. They chuckled with glee as they investigated whose water filled balloon covered the greatest length. On joining the school, pupils have very limited social skills. As a result of the excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, they grow in confidence, begin to understand their role as a member of a community and increasingly undertake personal hygiene routines. Parents report that those who stay overnight in the residence develop better sleep patterns and eating habits. Pupils with autism respond especially well to adults' the very high expectations of them, gradually gaining the confidence to move from the comfort of the classroom and familiar routines to activities where they have more freedom or meet with members of the public. This is an exceptional contribution to their economic well-being. Behaviour is remarkable for pupils with such difficulties and needs. Pupils care for each other and are tolerant of each others' idiosyncratic behaviour. Racial harmony pervades the school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teaching is of a very high standard. All adults working in the school and residence have excellent relationships with pupils. In addition to a very good knowledge of all primary school subjects and requirements, the adults have considerable expertise in working with pupils with autism and complex needs. Planning is focused on the acquisition of knowledge and skills and matched to particular needs of the pupils. Additionally, the incisive inclusion of targets in individual education plans and pupils' social needs in teachers' plans increases pupils' confidence and speeds up their learning. Teachers and skilled classroom assistants provide seamless provision and have exceptionally high expectations of pupils' actions, behaviour and work. Pupils with complex needs are managed especially well. Adults are particularly skilled in recognising when pupils with autism become unsettled, diverting their attention productively in order not to disrupt the learning of others. Lessons are exciting and very visual. This increases pupils' understanding. For example, pupils made considerable gains in taking on the role of a character and using the language of fairy tales through a magical meeting with the Three Billy Goats Gruff.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school provides a far wider range of activities than is usual for a setting of this type. In addition to all National Curriculum subjects, work with artists, musicians, drama and a wide range of clubs add significantly to pupils' enjoyment. Through first-rate small group work, pupils with language difficulties and the harder to reach pupils with autism make considerable gains in speaking, in social interaction and in their confidence. Themes such as Black history, African musicians and Indian dancers give pupils meaningful experiences, as well as celebrating the rich cultural mix of the school. The outstanding range of physical activities and the annual 'health week' very successfully increase pupils' awareness of keeping safe and healthy, in addition to contributing to their fitness levels. Pupils enjoy working in the state of the art science and environmental classroom especially, reporting that 'it's really great and makes us feel like proper scientists'. Numerous joint events with mainstream schools, for example, 'the kitchen sink' science project, add to pupils' understanding while encouraging them to learn and play together. Evening activities in the residence such as reading and personal care add to pupils' achievements.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Pupils receive excellent pastoral care both in the residence and in school. They report 'there is always someone to talk properly to'. The procedures to safeguard all pupils, including the most vulnerable, meet current government requirements and are known to all staff. Pupils' views are actively sought and acted upon. As a consequence, pupils know they have rights and use a 'Stop It' symbol if they feel uncomfortable about anything. Links with other agencies and health professionals are very efficient and effective. This is especially so in respect of the impact of programmes devised by speech and language therapists on the achievement of pupils with communication needs. The practice of holding consultant clinics on site is beneficial to pupils and means they have fewer absences for hospital appointments. Pupils receive extremely good

academic support and guidance. They understand their individual targets, hugging themselves with delight when they stick a completed target underneath their photograph on the classroom wall.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Visionary leadership and management are at the hub of this thriving school. A determination that all pupils and staff will achieve the best possible has led to aspirational targets that have resulted in a dynamic school that is extremely successful in all that it does. A very good management structure and excellent systems are enabling the school to 'grow leaders of the future'. An in-depth understanding of what it does well and where development is needed is driving school improvement. The governing body is increasing its understanding of the school by establishing a more structured programme to monitor its work. The skills of individual governors help the school considerably in matters of education and finance. The scrupulous tracking and analysis of pupils' progress is used very effectively to make sure there are no gaps in knowledge and no significant differences in the learning of different groups of pupils either by gender, need, or ethnic group. Similarly, the progress each pupil makes towards targets in their individual education plans is checked regularly. Leaders do not collate and analyse this information, however, in such a way as to add to their knowledge of achievement overall in particular subjects or by different groups of pupils. As a result, the information is not quite as valuable as it could be. This is a genuinely inclusive school that successfully enables pupils to overcome barriers to learning and one which celebrates diversity by 'turning it on its head, upside down, inside out and setting it flying'.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

First, may I say what a delightful time my colleague and I had when we inspected your school. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We especially enjoyed our meals with you and seeing your wonderful grounds. It was very clear from the discussions with you and the questionnaire replies we received from your parents that you enjoy school and think that you are safe and very well cared for.

You attend a very special school that is providing you with an outstanding education. This was very clear in the stirring assembly we joined which celebrated all your achievements. All this happens because your school is exceptionally well led and has first rate staff. This means teaching is outstanding so you learn at a remarkable rate. Your teachers provide really exciting lessons so learning is enormous fun. You are extremely well behaved, work very hard and care for each other. Mosshouse is equally excellent.

There are just two areas that would make it even better.

- Your teachers have collected masses of information about your successes. They now need to look even more closely at how well you are all meeting your own targets in each subject.
- The school must ensure that it meets the National Minimum Standards currently not met, as detailed in the boarding provision section of the full report.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.