



# Kirkleatham Hall School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 111777  
**Local Authority** Redcar and Cleveland  
**Inspection number** 289047  
**Inspection dates** 30 November –1 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Atkinson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Kirkleatham
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Redcar
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19		TS10 4QR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 483009
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	133	<b>Fax number</b>	01642 480054
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	24		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Nina Brennan
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gill Naylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Kirkleatham Hall is a day special school for pupils aged 4 to 19. The school serves a very wide geographical area. All pupils have profound and/or severe learning difficulties and a statement of special educational need. In addition, there is an increasing number of pupils with complex medical needs and for whom Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is their predominant learning difficulty. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has excellent links with local schools and colleges and is part of a School Sports Partnership, sharing a school sports coordinator with another school in the area.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features and gives good value for money. Students and pupils really look forward to coming to school because they receive outstanding care and support from adults with whom they have a very trusting and special relationship. This was illustrated by a further education student who said 'they're there for you, twenty-four seven'. The headteacher's exemplary leadership is a key factor in establishing and sustaining a hugely positive ethos in which students, pupils and staff feel personally valued and appreciated. The outcome is that students and pupils thrive in so many different areas that their self-confidence and self-esteem are significantly boosted and this provides an ideal platform for making good progress. Students and pupils are very proud of their school and keen to celebrate its many strengths. Parents are extremely appreciative of the commitment of the dedicated staff and their impact on the personalised care and planning for their children. As one parent commented, 'the staff are always willing to go that 'extra mile' not only for the children but also for the parents'.

Students' and pupils' achievements are good. They achieve well in the basic skills, particularly in speaking and listening, because they are taught effectively and their individual needs are fully addressed. Good use is made of the time available and the focus on learning remains a priority in the majority of lessons. Teachers have high expectations and are very skilled in managing challenging behaviour and complex learning needs. The assessment of progress in the small steps that students and pupils make is not always accurate and teachers recognise the need to be more consistent in these judgements. However, by the time students are ready to leave school they achieve good results in accredited courses. The school is re-writing some units of these courses to further increase the accessibility for those with very complex learning needs. Children in the Foundation Stage have a flying start in their education as their needs are quickly assessed and very specific interventions are adopted to help individuals to progress well. Foundation Stage staff are trying to develop a new approach to assessment that will give them an even clearer picture of children's abilities so that they set appropriate and challenging targets. Pupils reach a high standard in information and communication technology. Older students have excellent work related experiences and receive very good advice about what they can do next. Therefore, students acquire high aspirations and are ambitious about their future prospects.

Students' and pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and underpin other successes. Their behaviour and the respect they have for each other are exemplary. The school day is calm, structured and purposeful and everyone feels safe with a total absence of bullying or feelings of isolation. This is borne out by the excellent relationships between adults and students and pupils. The attention to pupils' health is reflected in the outstanding range of sporting opportunities available and the Healthy Schools Award. Students and pupils have a real 'say' in the school. The school council is a vibrant group that speaks up on behalf of others. They learn that their views can bring about change; for example, a reduction in the cost of the residential trip came about as a result of their representations to the headteacher. The

school's emphasis on independence, responsibility and team building is very influential in promoting student and pupil involvement in the community and prepares them very well for the challenges they face when they leave school.

The curriculum is outstanding because of the ways in which it is adapted to meet the personal needs of its students and pupils. The diversity of special needs is fully met and specialist resources and techniques are used expertly to extend the learning opportunities to all pupils. The curriculum introduces many challenges and frequently pushes students and pupils into previously unknown territory but this does not put them at risk. Instead it is motivational and releases a belief in them that unlocks hidden talents and abilities. The school is exceptional in the care and support it gives to pupils. Every child matters to every member of staff and individual needs, be they learning, social or medical, are particularly well catered for. There is undoubtedly a 'can do' culture throughout the school and each pupil feels valued, respected and challenged.

The many strengths of the school's provision derive directly from the quality of leadership and management. The headteacher is an outstanding leader who drives the school forwards with passion and commitment and can accurately evaluate its performance. She is well supported by an able senior management team who work collaboratively in supporting and initiating improvements. The leadership team are accurate in the self-evaluation of the school's performance and provide good support and mentoring to new teachers. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection and the governing body continues to challenge and support the school in its desire to give the very best for all students and pupils.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The provision in the Further Education Unit is good. The curriculum is enterprising and varied because of the range of highly relevant courses that is available to meet the individual needs of students. Currently not all of the units of accredited courses are accessible to students with complex learning needs. Students are given good guidance and support in completing accredited courses and developing the skills necessary to access future college places, work experience and employment opportunities. Staff work effectively in leading students towards achieving 'their dreams for the future' by helping them to think about what they will do when they leave and instilling high expectations. As one student proudly announced, 'I'm going to college to become a hairdresser'. Teaching is good and the relationships between adults and students are outstanding and very influential in promoting a mature and ambitious response from students who grow in confidence and self-esteem as a result. Leadership and management are good and ensure that students are achieving well in their courses and in their personal development.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Re-write units of accredited courses so that they are available to students and pupils of all abilities.

- Complete the development of the assessment profile for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress in the small steps are consistent in their accuracy.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

The children in the Foundation Stage make great strides in their learning and their achievement is good, especially in ICT. Throughout the school, students and pupils achieve well in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, and the strong emphasis on communication skills, particularly in speaking and listening, ensures they make good progress. They also make good progress against challenging targets and are given effective advice about what to do next to increase the rate of improvement.

Students and pupils achieve very well in creative subjects such as music and art because of the innovative ways in which these subjects are taught. They also achieve well in PE where there is a strong emphasis on promoting confidence in water, participating in outdoor activities and exercising regularly. Students and pupils with complex communication and learning difficulties make good progress, particularly when taught using specialist techniques that use sensory experiences, symbols and pictures to structure their learning activities. Pupils whose first language is not English make good progress due to the excellent support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students and pupils make outstanding progress in their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is a major strength of the school. A very positive and supportive ethos is underpinned with well-established routines and clear boundaries so that everyone knows what is expected of them. The effect is that students and pupils feel secure, safe and relaxed, leading to exemplary behaviour and total respect for each other. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in that most absences are linked to medical issues. Overall attendance is in line with the national average. The structured reward system celebrates students' and pupils' successes and is very effective in building and boosting their self-esteem. The Sportsmark gold award is indicative of the outstanding links with the School Sports Partnership that support the school in promoting excellent attitudes towards healthy living. Work related and enterprise skills make a significant contribution to the students' and pupils' economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of teaching is good and leads to secure gains in learning. Effective use is made of ICT to explain and demonstrate the expected learning outcomes. As a result, students and pupils are fully engaged and interested in the planned activities. Teachers have high expectations and plan carefully to ensure that everyone is fully included in the learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together in establishing a very positive learning climate with excellent levels of support. Occasionally, the teaching is not sufficiently challenging because the level of work set does not reflect what pupils are capable of. The effective organisation of learning and management of behaviour are key factors in ensuring that learners enjoy the carefully planned tasks and make good progress. Teachers track learners' progress using a nationally recognised 'small step' approach but there is some inconsistency in the accuracy of assessments.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum and its enrichment are outstanding. There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to participate in, for example, music, drama and physical education. The excellent opportunities for work experience are enormously influential in motivating students, widening their horizons and raising their aspirations, with the effect that there is a growing confidence and desire to experiment in new activities. Regular visitors to the school create an air of excitement among pupils and introducing them to their special skills results in significant progress in individuals' personal, social and academic skills. Very good use is made of specialist learning techniques and teaching assistants in ensuring that individuals experience a curriculum that is personal to their specific needs.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

This is an exceptionally safe and caring school and parents feel their children's personal needs are extremely well catered for. Arrangements to safeguard students and pupils are very thorough and risk assessments are always conducted to ensure that there is appropriate access to the available activities and experiences. This means that the most vulnerable or at risk pupils are well supported and given equality of opportunity. Child protection arrangements and those to ensure everyone's health, welfare and safety are very securely in place. All students and pupils are given very good guidance

and support with their learning targets and this is key to the progress and informed choices that they make.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The headteacher is an outstanding leader who has a very clear vision for the school and an unswerving commitment to ensuring that students and pupils receive a high quality of provision. She is a very effective manager of change and has established a good senior leadership team who are well focused on achieving the priorities of the school. The impact is a staff team with high morale and high expectations, and the school having a good capacity to improve further. A new tier of middle leadership and management has just been appointed and they are beginning to develop their monitoring and evaluating roles. Good support is available to new appointments and there is a very strong commitment from all staff to develop the expertise required to meet the needs of a very challenging and diverse group of learners.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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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>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<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.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Kirkleatham Hall School

Kirkleatham

Redcar

TS10 4QR

30 November 2006

Dear students and pupils

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. I was very impressed by your behaviour and attitude towards school. You all seemed to enjoy school so much and were rightly very proud of your achievements. The students in the Further Education Unit impressed me with their determination to reach their dreams and I feel confident that you will all reap the rewards of your efforts. I soon discovered from my discussions with you that you are an ambitious group of young people who want to do your very best. I know that the staff at the school also want you to be successful and they are the main reason that you have such a good time at school. I agree with you that you go to a great school where learning is fun and you have so many interesting things to do during the day and in school clubs. Your school is good because:

- staff make learning fun and interesting
- staff have high expectations of you and you respond enthusiastically
- you are all treated as individuals
- you have fantastic opportunities to learn new and interesting things.

It is really important that you make the most out of the opportunities school provides for you because then you will be able to achieve your goals in life.

I have discussed with the headteacher what the school can do to get even better and we agreed that it is very important that the courses in the FE unit are made available to everyone, that staff assess your progress accurately and that the school knows exactly what children can do when they start school so that targets can be set straight away.

However, the most important thing is that you continue to be as positive and enthusiastic as you were last week. You all made me realise what CAN be achieved through hard work and determination.

Best wishes

John Atkinson

Lead inspector