

# Nortonthorpe Hall School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107804
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	301339
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Emerson

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 category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Nutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Lee (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 April 2003
<b>School address</b>	Busker Lane Scissett Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD8 9JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 222921
<b>Fax number</b>	01484 222966

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves the whole of the Kirklees authority and is for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Although the school is designated to take both boys and girls, there are currently no girls on roll. A very high number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Four pupils are looked-after by the local authority. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. Some pupils have additional needs such as moderate learning difficulties or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Prior to joining the school, many pupils have had a disrupted education because of a history of poor attendance and exclusions from their previous schools. Consequently, standards on entry are very low. The school has a 'turnaround class' for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. This prepares excluded pupils and those at risk of permanent exclusion for a successful return to mainstream. The school is on a split site with a long journey between the two sites. The majority of the senior leadership team, which has been in place since September, has been appointed in an acting capacity for the whole school year.

## 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 an effective school where pupils make good progress in managing to control their behaviour so that they generally behave well. Consequently, the majority of pupils try hard in lessons and respond well to teachers. As a result, they learn well.

The school's detailed systems to assess pupils and track their progress indicate that pupils make good progress towards achieving the challenging targets which the school sets for them. Although standards remain low, pupils' achievement is good when compared to pupils in similar schools. The overall level of achievement in the school has improved. For example, the 2007 accredited results attained by Year 11 pupils are better than in previous years.

Pupils are keen to participate in the interesting activities which the school offers. This means that they begin to enjoy being at school. Consequently, although the attendance of some pupils remains too low, many pupils make good progress in improving their attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Strategies, such as the system of 'restorative justice', are very effective in making pupils think hard about their attitudes and behaviour. As a result, social and moral development are promoted very well. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about the lives of people in diverse cultures.

Teaching and learning are good. Work is set at just the right level for individual pupils and they are given good support in lessons. The very good programme of additional support provided through the specialist bases means that pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. The 'turnaround class' is very effective in quickly and successfully returning pupils aged 7 to 11 years to mainstream schools. Parents and schools are very positive about this aspect of the school's work. For example, one school comments that a pupil who has been through the programme is 'a changed boy'. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are well taught and have good opportunities to follow practical courses such as 'construction'. This prepares them well for the work place as they develop marketable skills. However, the accommodation for these older pupils at the Fitzwilliam Centre, which was noted as a concern in the previous inspection, remains inadequate.

Pupils learn to take responsibilities and contribute to the school and wider community well. Although pupils say that there is some bullying, they told the inspectors that they feel safe in school. The school has strong procedures in place to strengthen relationships between pupils and to address any bullying that occurs. The number of exclusions has fallen dramatically this school year. Care, guidance and support are good. The school works closely with a variety of outside agencies, such as Social Services, to support vulnerable pupils. All pupils have detailed targets for behaviour and learning. However, although pupils are involved well in setting and reviewing their behavioural targets they are less well involved in monitoring their own learning. A good variety of physical activities and an emphasis on healthy eating promotes pupils' health well.

In the short time that they have been in post, the members of the temporary leadership team have been highly effective in addressing key issues such as the high number of exclusions and the weak attendance of some pupils. They have created a positive learning environment where there are high expectations for learning and behaviour. The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and is moving the school forward at a cracking pace. An experienced governing body supports the school well. Strong links with the local authority are effective in helping the school to address issues such as provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Evaluation and monitoring

are good and the school has a very clear and accurate view as to how well it is doing. With the exception of finding alternative accommodation for pupils in Years 10 and 11, the school has effectively addressed the issues raised in the previous inspection and provides good value for money.

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

- Work with families and pupils to improve attendance.
- Involve pupils more thoroughly in setting and reviewing their targets for learning.
- Improve accommodation for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Provide more opportunities to prepare pupils for living in a culturally diverse society.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Many pupils enter the school with weak academic skills because their education has been disrupted as a result of poor behaviour. However, pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. The good systems which have been introduced have enabled pupils to make better progress in developing literacy skills. Pupils' records show that they achieve well in relation to their individual targets. Results are good when compared to similar schools. In order to maximise pupils' opportunities to gain qualifications, some pupils are entered for English and science in Year 9. In 2007, 90% of Year 11 pupils gained one A\* to G grade at GCSE and 20% gained five A\* to G grades. In addition, most pupils gained vocational qualifications and/or Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils respond well to the strong emphasis on personal and social development, which permeates every aspect of school life. Their self-confidence and self-esteem improves and they develop better social skills. Pupils make particularly good progress in learning how to manage conflict and to remain calm in situations that they find difficult. This is evident in the fall in the number of exclusions. Strong relationships with staff and effective input from the 'discovery learning team' supports pupils' personal development well. However, opportunities to prepare pupils for living in a culturally diverse society are underdeveloped. The impact of the school's carefully planned strategy to raise attendance has resulted in an improvement for some pupils. However, the attendance of some is still less than it should be.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils are keen to succeed because relationships are good and because staff are skilled at rewarding effort and achievement. Pupils respond well to the high expectations for learning and behaviour. They try hard and take care with the presentation of their work. Teachers are skilled at giving pupils good feedback as to how well they have done, both during lessons and when they mark the pupils' work. Good recording of progress takes place during lessons and there are consistent assessment procedures in place throughout the school. Consequently, work set is well matched to the learning levels of individual pupils. This means that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Some lessons do not start as

crisply as they should so that teaching time is lost. Although behavioural management is generally good, there is some inconsistency among staff in responding to pupils who use inappropriate language.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school offers the pupils a good range of lessons and activities. There is a good focus on developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is strong. There is a good programme of enrichment activities led by the effective 'discovery learning team'. This is strengthened by activities after school, which are offered as part of an extended day curriculum. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 benefit from teaching by subject specialists, which takes place in good quality specialist accommodation. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 includes vocational options and is delivered by subject specialists. However, although the school makes the best of a bad situation, the accommodation for these older pupils is unsatisfactory. The Fitzwilliam Centre does not provide a good learning environment and its position, on the edge of a major road, is highly unsuitable.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Suitable procedures are in place for child protection and to ensure the health and safety of the pupils. Pupils trust the staff and say that there are always people they can turn to if they have a problem. Strong links with a variety of agencies, and careful monitoring, ensure that particularly vulnerable pupils, such as looked-after children and young offenders, receive good support. Systems to promote good behaviour are strong and well understood by the pupils. However, pupils are less well involved in setting and reviewing their targets for learning. Systems to promote good attendance and to reduce exclusions have been much improved since the new leadership team came into post in September.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The acting headteacher is providing a strong steer for the school. He has managed to retain stability, in spite of the significant changes to the leadership team, whilst at the same time effectively moving the school forward. The newly constituted senior leadership team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and work well together. They have been effective, during the short period in which they have been in post, in determining the key areas of focus necessary to bring about improvement. This is because monitoring and evaluation is good and underpins development planning well. The school has begun to strengthen subject leadership. For example, English is well led at the Scissett site. However, subject leadership is still underdeveloped. The governing body are effective. They support the school well and challenge both the school and the local authority when necessary. Although leadership and management are good, the capacity to improve is only satisfactory at the present time because all members of the senior leadership team are in temporary or acting posts.

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## 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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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
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**

Inspection of Nortonthorpe Hall School, Huddersfield, HD8 9JU

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. It was very useful to know what you think about your school.

There are some things that are really good about your school.

- You are given good support in lessons which enables you to make good progress with your work.
- You have good relationships with staff. This helps you to do well in improving your behaviour.
- You do many interesting things, such as going camping in Bradley Woods.

All of this is possible because your headteacher and all the staff do their best to make the school as good as they can for you.

I have asked your teachers to improve a few things to make your school even better.

- To help those of you who take more time off school than you should to improve your attendance. It is important that you attend every day to improve your chances when you leave school.
- To involve you more in setting and reviewing your individual learning targets.
- To improve the accommodation for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- To give you more opportunities to learn about the beliefs and cultures of people from different ethnic backgrounds.

I hope you carry on enjoying what you are doing and continue to help your teachers all you can.