

Springhead School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121772
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314093
Inspection dates	26–27 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Noreen Buckingham

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	52
6th form	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Mennell
Headteacher	Mrs C Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Barry's Lane Scarborough North Yorkshire YO12 4HA
Telephone number	01723 367829
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Age group	2–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils present a wide range of severe and complex learning difficulties and are aged between 2 and 19 years. Recently a group of the more able students has been admitted to the sixth form and this may well continue in the future. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. Of the 52 pupils currently on roll very few are from backgrounds other than White British. A very small minority of pupils are in the care of the local authority (LA). The youngest pupils are taught in the adjoining primary school. The school has the Healthy School Award, Activemark and Sportsmark, and the Basic Skills Quality Mark for both primary and secondary departments in the school. The school has an LA outreach role and has developed strong links with many mainstream schools.

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 a school community in which pupils are at the very heart of all that it does. Springhead School offers its pupils an outstanding education. It is an extremely happy school; pupils enjoy coming and as a consequence are ready to learn. The philosophy underpinning the provision takes account of the needs for the development of the whole child and not just their academic achievement. This is why the total school package gives pupils an outstanding all-round education. Leadership and management are fully committed to this and can be very creative in meeting this goal. Parents wholeheartedly support all that the school offers.

The nature of pupils' difficulties means progress is measured in very small steps against individual targets. Pupils' achievements are good and outstanding in relation to their skills in communication and personal development. Pupils complete their schooling with a good range of accredited awards but the recent addition of the more able pupils has made staff realise there is a need to extend the current range of external accreditation to meet their needs. This has started but is not fully embedded. Teaching is effective and leads to good learning. Rigorous checks on how well pupils are progressing means that staff know exactly where pupils are up to in their learning and ensure they have good opportunities to make progress well. The Nursery works extremely closely with the adjoining primary school and gives children an excellent start to their education. Similarly, the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have numerous opportunities to mix with their primary school peers. Any barriers to including pupils in mainstream school have truly been removed.

The extremely high level of care and support has an extremely significant impact on pupils' personal development. Intertwined are the very positive relationships across the school between adults and pupils both in and outside of the classroom. Pupils are treated with respect and pupils respond by working hard in lessons and trying their very best in other areas. Their behaviour is exemplary and levels of attendance are good. Great care and planning have gone into the development of the exciting and extremely effective curriculum. It is planned to meet the philosophy of the school in educating the whole child. Pupils' experiences are enriched by a very wide range of visits to interesting places within the local area and beyond, and by entertaining visitors, for example who perform live music or are storytellers. Lunchtime clubs and a small youth club also add to their involvement in different activities.

The outstanding leadership and management of all staff with management responsibilities ensures that everything possible is done to give pupils opportunities to extend their learning and develop independence. Governors wholeheartedly support what the school does. They play an active part in school life and are in the process of finding even more ways of challenging the school to do even better.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Students in the sixth form are offered outstanding opportunities to develop daily living skills which promote independence. The sixth form is very well led and managed by teachers who are committed to ensuring that students are given the very best experiences to prepare them for life after school. Students are offered a good variety of work-related experiences including work and college placements, and enterprise opportunities, all of which enable them and their parents to make considered choices when the time to leave school arrives. Alongside this, they

achieve well in good range of accredited courses, including the Equals Moving On scheme, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and a range of The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) units. Staff are exploring other awards to meet the needs of the more able students who have recently been admitted.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The quality of education children receive in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. This Nursery has an excellent partnership with its host primary school. It offers exceptional opportunities for children to learn and play with a large group of mainstream peers who are very good role models. This gives pupils an outstanding start to their learning journey. Leadership and management are excellent and the joint planning with mainstream staff is an excellent example of what 'inclusion' is all about. Thorough assessment leads to challenging targets which are incorporated into short-term plans. These are tracked frequently so that staff are kept well aware of each child's progress. There is a lively and exciting atmosphere with activities which stimulate children's curiosity so that they want to join in. Nominated Year 6 mainstream pupils support children as 'buddies' as often as they can, demonstrating both schools' commitment to inclusion. It is delightful to watch children help each other and play together.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range of suitable accreditation for older more able students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' complex physical and learning difficulties mean that attainment on entry is very low, and while many pupils may not move much beyond this point they make very good progress improving their ability to communicate their likes and dislikes, either by vocalising, gesture or via a communication aid. Overall achievement is consistently good and outstanding in pupils' communication and personal and social skills. Older pupils and students gain accreditation via the Equals Moving On scheme, ASDAN and the AQA Awards scheme. Their achievement in these courses is particularly strong in life skills and independent living. The cohort of more able students are not yet achieving fully on more advanced forms of accreditation although they have not been in school for very long.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The high majority of pupils are very confident youngsters who are not afraid to express their opinions. This is symbolic of their outstanding personal development. This is partly as a result of the strong emphasis on personal, social and health education within the curriculum and also the extremely high level of care and support. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they work as hard as they can in lessons. Pupils have plenty of opportunities for physical activities and most are aware that this helps them to stay healthy. The school has the Healthy School Award and places strong emphasis on all aspects of health issues. Older pupils in particular have an extremely good awareness of the needs of others within the community and all pupils regularly

support fundraising for charities. Work-related learning, going to college and enterprise activities gives pupils a very good appreciation of what is needed when they leave school. The school council is a very effective forum which enables pupils to experience responsibility and be active participants in making decisions which affect them. 'The school is brilliant' and 'We have lots of fun' are some of the comments made by pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted, for example through assemblies, art, religious education and visits into the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features. Lesson planning is particularly good and details individual outcomes clearly. Tasks are matched to individual needs although on occasions, the more able pupils could be stretched a little more. Teaching assistants support pupils positively. All staff know pupils very well and the positive relationships not only support learning in the classroom but in other situations as well. Teachers use visual and tactile resources alongside signing and verbal prompts so that all pupils can access the lesson, achieve well and make good progress. Staff are effective in the way they support and encourage pupils to overcome their individual problems. Assessment is robust and leads to individual learning plans with targets which are incorporated into lesson plans.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum has been particularly well thought out and planned. There are very clear links between the school's vision, the National Curriculum and pupil's statements of special educational need. Much learning is planned in a way that ensures pupils' key skills are reinforced in many of the different subject areas. As well as academic subjects the curriculum emphasises very effectively personal, social and health education so that many pupils leave as extremely confident, mature young people. The curriculum is enriched significantly by lunchtime clubs and an after-school youth club, many visits to places of interest and a range of visitors to school. The 'Chatter Matter' club is fun, encouraging pupils to do just what it says, chatter in whatever way they chose; an extremely effective way of supporting communication skills. Primary aged pupils are taught in the adjacent mainstream school, giving them excellent opportunities to mix with others. In addition, a small number of pupils have part-time inclusion placements at their local schools supported by the very effective outreach team. Work-related learning is given high priority for older pupils, who have opportunities for work placements which are carefully planned and monitored. The recent acquisition of an allotment has given them the opportunity to develop a range of skills, for example, digging, planting and erecting a shed and poly-tunnel. This enterprise is giving pupils an excellent opportunity to practise their marketing and financial skills as they prepare to sell their produce.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

All pupils are treated with the utmost respect and dignity. Staff are good role models and relationships across the school are very positive. Staff are prepared to 'go that extra mile' for the benefit of pupils. All safeguarding procedures are secure and parents are very satisfied that their children are well cared for and safe. Links with a wide range of external agencies and professionals support the school's work very well. Health care plans are in place for those pupils who need them and very clear systems for measuring and tracking pupils' progress. Checking on how well pupils are progressing is robust and every opportunity is taken to include pupils in the annual review of their work; pupils are encouraged to have their say.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is continually looking for ways to improve the quality of education offered to pupils and has been very creative in managing the many shortcomings in the accommodation. This has led to innovative and highly successful ways of meeting pupils' needs. The best example is the totally inclusive Nursery run in partnership with the adjoining primary school. The senior management team, staff and governors have a shared commitment for the long-term development of the school. Since the last inspection the school has not stood still and actively seeks ways to improve what it offers pupils. Self-evaluation is accurate and the headteacher knows exactly what needs to be done to move the school on. For example, teaching and learning is about to be strengthened by extending the ways the older and more able pupils are taught. Also, the school is intending to gain nationally recognised specialist status for 'cognition and learning'. As part of its LA outreach work the school already has very effective links with a number of mainstream schools. All staff are actively encouraged to participate in further professional development and this has led to staff who have a very wide range of expertise which is used effectively to support pupils. Governors support the school well. Visits are formally recorded and governors are investigating currently if they can improve their support for the school even more. Because of the dedication and commitment of staff and governors, the capacity to improve is excellent.

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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	16-19
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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?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	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	
How well 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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	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

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school some days ago. I enjoyed my visit and I want you to know what I think about your school.

I think your school is outstanding and gives you all an excellent start to your education. All staff work very hard to ensure that your lessons are interesting so that you can make good progress. Staff take very good care of you and your parents think so too. The headteacher, staff and governors have plans to improve your school even more. Governors are checking all of the ways they can help with this. Yours is a happy school and you get to do lots of interesting activities. I enjoyed the 'Chatter Matter' club at lunchtime - it was fun. I was also interested to hear about your allotment and what you intend to do with it. I was delighted to see the very youngest children in the Nursery next door 'mixing in' and enjoying themselves. At the other end of the school the oldest pupils are doing well but I have suggested that staff make sure there are other forms of accreditation that will stretch you even more in your learning. I think you all work hard and are helpful towards each other.

I hope you keep on enjoying coming to school.