

# Castle Hill School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134689
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	316271
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 May 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>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	105
6th form	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judith Waddington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gill Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Newsome Road South Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD4 6JL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 226659
<b>Fax number</b>	0

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<b>Age group</b>	3–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a special school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. A significant proportion of pupils have additional needs such as autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. As a consequence of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards are very low on entry to the school. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is high. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher than average with a high number of pupils from Asian or Asian British-Pakistani backgrounds. The school opened in September 2006 as a result of the reorganisation of special schools in Kirklees. The school has received a Blue Plaque for architectural design and an award from Kirklees Council for outstanding achievement in community and outreach work.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Castle Hill is an outstanding school. Driven by the exceptional vision and determination of the headteacher, the school has developed extremely rapidly in the five terms that it has been open. In this short time, highly effective systems have been established to provide an outstanding quality of education and to rigorously monitor all aspects of school life. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet current requirements. The fine new building and excellent resources are used very effectively and provide an inspirational learning environment for the staff and pupils.

The staff team is highly committed and shares the headteacher's very high aspirations for the school. Outstanding leadership and management are provided by leaders at all levels and by the governors. Relationships throughout the school are exemplary.

The quality of teaching is outstanding and the school has excellent systems in place to improve it even further. Pupils are assessed regularly and their progress is very carefully tracked. The curriculum is very well adapted to provide a variety of lively lessons and activities which meet the specific needs of pupils particularly well.

Children in the Foundation Stage settle very quickly and make an exceptional start to their education. Pupils throughout the school build on this very strong beginning. In addition, excellent links with mainstream schools give pupils exceptionally good opportunities to work alongside mainstream peers. Consequently, all groups of pupils make remarkable progress and achievement is outstanding, particularly in developing communication and personal skills. Students in the sixth form continue this trend of very good achievement. They become sensible young adults and are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their life.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Staff know the pupils exceptionally well. They provide just the right level of support to enable pupils to feel safe while at the same time learning to become more independent. Pupils really enjoy school and their attendance is good. They are remarkably enthusiastic and try very hard in lessons. Their personal development is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress in learning how to make choices to keep themselves safe and healthy. There is an active and effective school council and pupils make a full and highly valued contribution to the school and the community. Relationships with parents, carers and outside agencies are extremely strong. Parents value the excellent education which they say their children receive. 'Castle Hill is a marvellous school and it is amazing to think that it has only been open 20 months. There is a tremendous commitment by all staff to the children and young people, and a strong sense of continuous improvement' is a view that typifies that of many parents.

The school sets very challenging targets both for individual pupils and for the school as a whole. Targets are met on time and often exceeded. The school has an outstanding capacity to improve further. It provides excellent value for money.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 1

The sixth form leader has been very effective in developing an enthusiastic and skilled staff team. Teaching is outstanding with a very good emphasis on involving students in assessing how well they are doing. Work set is very well matched to their age and individual needs. Consequently, students make outstanding progress, particularly in developing their

communication and independence skills. They have excellent opportunities to take on responsibilities and they take a lead role in the school in raising money for charities. Students' personal development is outstanding. The excellent emphasis on developing independence skills in conjunction with a strong programme of work-related learning places students in very good stead to succeed in adult life. The sixth form continues to develop rapidly. All students successfully follow an externally accredited course and additional accredited courses are being introduced.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The Foundation Stage offers children an outstanding start to their education. The Foundation Stage leader has excellent teaching skills and provides extremely strong leadership for the staff team. All staff know the children very well and provide very carefully planned activities which are exceptionally well matched to children's individual needs. Excellent team work and very sensitive support enables children to settle in successfully and make very rapid progress. Excellent links with mainstream schools ensure that higher ability children are sufficiently and appropriately challenged. Children are very thoroughly assessed on entry to the school and the assessments are regularly updated. The quality of children's records is exemplary. These provide excellent evidence of the outstanding progress made by children, particularly in developing personal and social skills and learning how to communicate.

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

There are no areas for improvement additional to those already identified by the school in its planning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

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

The school's excellent tracking systems demonstrate clearly that pupils in all age groups make exceptional progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Their progress in learning how to communicate using speech, signs or symbols is particularly notable. As a result of the school's very strong focus on improving teaching and learning, the number of pupils exceeding their challenging targets has risen dramatically this year. Because work set is always very well matched to pupils' individual needs, there is no difference between the achievement of pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils whose condition is deteriorating are helped to maintain their skills for as long as possible. The very good provision for pupils whose first language is not English ensures that they make as strong progress as other pupils. Pupils in the specialist class for autistic spectrum disorder also make outstanding progress.

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

### **Grade: 1**

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

Pupils' attitudes in lessons and behaviour around the school are generally excellent because pupils respond very well to the strong systems to promote good behaviour. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Consequently, pupils develop

into responsible and caring young people who make a real contribution to both the school and the wider community. The excellent programme of personal and social education ensures that pupils have a very good understanding about how to stay healthy and safe. There are effective procedures in place to encourage good attendance. Consequently, attendance is good overall.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The school's exemplary records demonstrate very clearly that teaching has improved significantly since the school opened. This is because there are highly effective systems in place to monitor teaching and to train and coach teachers and support staff. Teachers and support staff have an expert understanding of pupils' particular needs. Work set is based on accurate assessment and presented at just the right level for individual pupils. Pupils like and respect their teachers and this makes them very keen to learn. Outstanding teamwork and very well targeted individual support ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons and learn very well. Lessons are lively and fun and teachers have high expectations for learning and behaviour. Teachers and support staff are extremely skilled at helping pupils to communicate using spoken language, signs and symbols. Staff are very effective in working with pupils who have challenging behaviour. Consequently, lessons proceed smoothly and all pupils learn very well.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Provision to develop key skills such as literacy and numeracy is excellently balanced with provision to promote pupils' social competence and independence. The curriculum is very well adapted for pupils with additional needs such as autistic spectrum disorder or multi-sensory impairment and for pupils whose first language is not English. The sensory curriculum for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is excellent. A real strength of the curriculum is the many excellent opportunities for inclusion with pupils in mainstream schools, which have been developed by the family liaison and outreach worker. There are excellent resources and the new school building provides an outstanding learning environment for pupils.

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

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. All pupils who need them, have detailed plans for feeding, behaviour and/or personal care. These are of a very high quality and are followed consistently by all staff. Pupils are fully involved in setting and reviewing their own targets for learning and behaviour. Excellent links with outside agencies, including health personnel and therapists, and with parents ensure that pupils' individual needs are very well met. Pupils told the inspector that they feel very safe and well supported. They said that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Procedures for child protection are well

established and regularly reviewed. There is a clear policy for ensuring that health, safety and risk assessments are completed as needed.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership and management teams, provides outstanding leadership for the school. She has been highly effective in creating a happy and ambitious staff team who are determined to provide the very best education for pupils. Subject leaders fulfil their role very well. Governors challenge and support the school extremely well. They are very closely involved in the life of the school, and there are very good lines of communication between school leaders and the governors. The school's performance is monitored extremely rigorously and the senior leadership team knows exactly how well it is doing. Evaluation is very accurate and the analysis of information gained from assessments is exemplary. The impact of record keeping and evaluation is enhanced by an excellent use of new technology. Teachers' lesson plans and all documents, policies and assessment information are held on the school server. There is an outstanding use of very high quality digital photographic records and digital video discs. This produces an excellent record of pupils' progress and the way in which the school is developing rapidly; it allows all staff to readily access information. The school improvement plan is an excellent tool to move the school forward. The challenging targets which the school sets for itself are regularly reviewed and frequently exceeded.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## 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	NA	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
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	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

### 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?	1	1
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

<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>	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	1	
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**

I know that some of you find reading very difficult, so your teachers will tell you with this letter. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I inspected your school. I really 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.

Your parents and carers think you go to an excellent school and I agree with them.

There are many things that are really outstanding in your school. These include:

- the excellent care and support you are given so that you feel safe and learn very well
- the outstanding records that the school makes to show you and your parents and carers how well you are doing
- the excellent progress you make in learning to communicate and in developing your independent skills
- the exceptionally good teaching, which enables you to learn lots in lessons.

All of this is possible because the headteacher, staff and governors do a fantastic job and try their very best to make the school as good as they can for you.

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