

Norfolk Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107177
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324542
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	91
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Nuttal
Headteacher	Mrs Pam Coleman
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Park Grange Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S2 3QF
Telephone number	0114 272 6165
Fax number	0114 272 5932

Age group	2–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of teaching on the achievement of all groups of pupils; the quality of provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and how well the school promotes community cohesion. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, its assessment records, observations of the school at work, discussions with pupils, the headteacher and representatives of staff and the governing body, a scrutiny of school documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils with severe learning difficulties form a large population in the school. A number of pupils have additional needs such as sight problems. The majority of pupils have statements of special educational need. The remaining pupils are being assessed to determine if they need a statement. Currently, 17 children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Five children are under three years of age. The school has applied for childcare registration in respect of these children. Pupils all live in Sheffield, mainly in the south of the city. Most pupils are White British, but many ethnic backgrounds are represented in the school. A minority of pupils are learning English as an additional language. A total of 17 languages are spoken by these pupils' families. A very small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Investors in People awards. The headteacher took up her post in September 2007.

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. First-rate leadership has enabled Norfolk Park to maintain the many excellent features identified during the previous inspection. Additionally, there have been very significant moves forward. For example, the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage was formerly good and is now outstanding. The school's drive for improvement is undiminished and it has an exceptional capacity to achieve its ambitious targets.

Pupils' immense enjoyment of school is just one aspect of their outstanding personal development. Their broad smiles and eagerness to tackle new challenges demonstrate vividly the excellent relationships pupils share with staff and their friends. They take pleasure in a host of activities, such as dressing up or playing outside. However, pupils also point out that this is a 'work school' and they like learning. In fact, they learn extremely well because teaching is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to help every pupil take the next step in learning. Lessons offer exciting tasks and resources that take full account of each pupil's needs. Pulling a long ribbon, set at just the right height, enabled a child with restricted movement to cause the wings of a model seagull to flap. She made the necessary effort because the bird and the teacher's enthusiastic reading of a well-loved story motivated her. Such attention to detail is a key element in the outstanding progress pupils make, for example, in English, mathematics and science. Owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards are exceptionally low compared with those in mainstream schools. However, pupils' achievement is exceptional. The school sets challenging targets for each pupil and a very high proportion of these are met or exceeded.

The headteacher is steadfast in her determination to provide all pupils with equal opportunities to learn and develop. She sees to it that all staff share this commitment and that it underpins every aspect of the school's work. As a result of this outstanding success in promoting equality, all boys and girls achieve equally impressively, regardless of their background or needs. For example, most pupils have immense difficulty in expressing themselves and many are unable to speak. Staff vigorously pursue the school's aim to enable every pupil to communicate in the ways that suit them best and offer a wide variety of options. Because they are consistently encouraged, for example, to make choices, pupils make particularly good progress in learning to sign, exchange symbols or pictures, indicate with their eyes, use switches, or speak clearly. Pupils whose home language is not English benefit enormously from this focus on communication, enabling them to achieve as well as others who have similar learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school also works as closely as possible with pupils' families so learning continues when children are at home. Staff regularly offer courses, for example, in signing, and the school employs interpreters to ensure that all parents and carers understand how they can play a full part in their child's education. Parents very much appreciate the support they receive, one describing the school as 'a lifeline for the family'.

The school cares for pupils and supports them exceptionally well. It meets current safeguarding requirements and excellent links with agencies and professionals enhance its work. Specialist services, such as those for pupils with sight problems, help to ensure that resources and approaches are closely tailored to the needs of all pupils. Consistent with the school's drive to help pupils be as independent as possible, on a snowy day and under staff's watchful eyes, children relished clambering up a bank and whizzing down safely on a sledge. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties also enjoy being in the fresh air. Their confidence in the staff enables them to relax during sessions of physical activity, for example, in the

swimming pool. All pupils develop an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles, for instance, by choosing the fruit they eat at snack time. Pupils become extremely aware of how to keep themselves safe. They learn to take care during their frequent outings in the community, walking to the city centre or using trams to travel further afield. Visits such as these, form a key part of the outstanding curriculum. They enable pupils to practise social and communication skills and gain new experiences, such as making animated films. A substantial and growing number of pupils join lessons in their local mainstream schools. These opportunities for pupils to work and play with children from a wider range of backgrounds form an important element of the school's good contribution to community cohesion. Plans are in place to develop this work further, for example, by increasing the number of pupils who have links with Norfolk Park's neighbouring primary school.

Staff are highly trained in important areas such as managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, for example, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are helped to cope with changes and learn how to calm down in challenging circumstances. This means that not only is behaviour in school outstanding, but pupils can go with confidence to work in other schools or attend residential visits. Pupils willingly accept responsibility for jobs around school and cooperate with others, sharing and taking turns. A 'circle of friends' discussion group helps to prepare pupils for playing their part in making decisions about the school. Attendance is good; pupils are seldom absent unless they are ill. Their very positive attitudes help to ensure that they are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage in their education.

The members of the senior leadership team provide the headteacher with excellent support, as does the governing body, particularly through its extremely active steering group. Rigorous systems to monitor all aspects of its work mean that the school has an acute awareness of its many strengths and where further improvement is required. The staff collect a vast amount of information from their assessments of each pupil's learning and development. Teachers and the school's leaders make excellent use of this knowledge, analysing the data, drawing conclusions about the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, and helping all pupils to achieve equally well. However, this work is very time consuming because of the way in which assessment information is organised and presented.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The school provides exceptionally well for children. They make outstanding progress especially in learning to communicate and in their independence and social skills. Staff demonstrate considerable expertise in meeting the needs of young children and adapt the best mainstream practice to suit children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They have extremely high expectations for each child. Learning starts as soon as children arrive each day. They become accustomed to the resources on offer and whenever possible make their own way to their chosen activity. Staff have a remarkable ability to extend children's learning, for example, by demonstrating how to play with sand or build a snowman or by pointing out what another child is doing. Learning opportunities are stimulating and relevant to children's needs and stage of development. Children regularly learn outdoors and are frequently out and about, visiting shops, the park and cafes. Their personal development is excellent. They learn to sustain activities and play together. Staff care for children outstandingly well. Links with other professionals such as therapists ensure that children are comfortable and ready to learn. Staff value parents' knowledge of their children. For example, insights into what children enjoy enable staff to guide them as they start to make choices. The deputy headteacher provides

outstanding leadership and management. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection, especially in the way in which observations of children's learning are recorded and used to ensure their achievement is as effective as it can be.

What the school should do to improve further

- Organise and present assessment information so it can be used more efficiently by staff and leaders.

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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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ 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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
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 learners' needs?	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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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?	2
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
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**

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school. It was lovely to meet you and see you working and playing. I really enjoyed watching you have fun in the snow.

You told me how much you like Norfolk Park. I agree with you. It is an outstanding school.

Here are some of the brilliant things about your school:

- you enjoy learning and make lots of friends
- you all have lots of lovely things to do in lessons and at playtimes
- you go on visits and meet different people
- you learn how to talk and communicate in your own special way
- you feel safe because the staff look after you so carefully.

The school keeps getting better and better. To help your headteacher and the staff, I have asked them to find easier ways to keep an eye on how well you are all making progress.

I want to send all the adults and each one of you my very best wishes for the future