

Kilton Thorpe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111788
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	325462
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	David Smith

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	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	122
Sixth form	30
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 Ian Bowman
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Marshall Drive Brotton Saltburn-by-the-Sea TS12 2UW
Telephone number	01287 677265
Fax number	01287 677265

Age group	4–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Boys outnumber girls by 2 to 1 in this school for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. About half of the pupils have severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. An increasing number of the pupils display autistic spectrum disorders. The remaining pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties, physical difficulties or are experiencing behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A small number of children are in public care. The vast majority of the pupils are White British. The school occupies a large site shared with a separate sixth form block and a primary and a secondary school. Kilton Thorpe has a range of awards including Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark, Activemark, Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People. It became a Specialist Arts College in September 2008. The school is a member of the East Cleveland Education Improvement Partnership.

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. It is well led and managed. It has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is outstanding whilst that of the sixth form is good.

The nature of pupils' difficulties means they cannot reach the standards expected of pupils in mainstream schools. However, as a result of good teaching, they thoroughly enjoy their learning and make good progress. Assessment systems are used effectively to provide the right level of challenge for most pupils across the full range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the school. Occasionally limitations in the planning lead to satisfactory rather than good progress. Pupils make good progress in their communication and numeracy skills but satisfactory progress in their writing. They achieve very well in science and information and communication technology (ICT). They also make good progress in their creative and performing arts which reflects the school's specialist status. Staff work very effectively as a team and promote very good relationships. Due to the excellent teaching in the EYFS, the children make outstanding progress in their learning. Students in the sixth form are taught well and their achievement is good. However, links with other schools and colleges are underdeveloped as the students have too few opportunities to attend courses in the community.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Their attitudes, behaviour and enjoyment of their learning are outstanding and their attendance is good. They make excellent progress in their adoption of healthy lifestyles and, in particular, look forward to their physical activities. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to share their learning with their mainstream peers. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community.

The curriculum is good. Good attention is paid to the development of the pupils' basic skills in all aspect of their learning. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their enterprise skills in preparation for their lives as young adults. The impact of the school's specialist arts status is positive and helps to enrich the pupils' learning. The staff team work hard to ensure that limitations in the accommodation are not a barrier to the pupils' learning.

Excellent attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are well cared for and kept safe. The school works very well with other agencies to ensure that every opportunity is provided for pupils to take part in and enjoy their learning. Parents work very closely with the school and appreciate the hard work and dedication of the staff. Sixth form students are provided with good care, guidance and support and make good progress in their personal development and well-being.

Self-review processes are effective and demonstrate that the senior leaders are aware of the strengths and areas for development. The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge to the school leaders. However, school improvement planning has too many priorities which overburdens the staff. Effective staff training ensures that the pupils' full range of learning needs is met. The strong focus on promoting equal opportunities for all contributes to the cohesive and harmonious ethos of the school.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form provision is good and is well led and managed. Students achieve well because of the good teaching. In particular, the students enjoy the opportunity to learn in the more adult learning environment of the sixth form block. They make good progress in their personal development and well-being. The promotion of positive relationships is very good and this helps to build the students' self-confidence. They are effectively supported and guided to become more independent learners. This is helped, for example, by their use of public transport on their weekly visit to a local sports centre. Also, the students thoroughly enjoy their residential trips which help to boost their social development. Links with other providers are satisfactory, rather than good, as too few opportunities are provided for off-site courses and work placements. Senior leaders are fully aware of the strengths and areas for development and have a good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The use of assessment to track the children's progress and help plan the next steps in their learning is very thorough. This helps the children to make outstanding progress towards achieving their learning goals. They make impressive progress in their ability to communicate and this helps them in other aspects of their learning. Activities are exciting and harness the children's enthusiasm and personal interests. The staff team work very well together and are totally committed to giving the children the best start to their education. This helps to promote their outstanding personal development and well-being. Leadership of the staff team is excellent. The staff team is totally up-to-date with Early Years developments and this gives adults the confidence to drive for ever improving standards. They have very positive links with other agencies to help ensure that the welfare of the children is excellent. Despite limitations in their outdoor play facilities, the learning environment is used very well to boost children's physical development. Parents make many very positive comments about the excellent progress made by their children in school and how this contributes to their life at home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school improvement plan has a manageable number of clear priorities.
- Ensure that all lesson planning is based on the available assessment data to help provide consistently high levels of challenge.
- Extend the range of available courses for the sixth form students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. The nature of their learning difficulties means they cannot attain the standards expected of pupils in mainstream schools. Thorough tracking of progress demonstrates that any variation in pupils' achievement is understandably linked to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most children looked after by the local authority make good progress, as do their peers in the school. Pupils make good progress in English. They make particularly good progress in their communication skills but only satisfactory progress in their writing. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and display increasing confidence in applying their

skills to practical situations. Despite limitations in the accommodation, pupils make very good progress in science. The good resources in ICT help to promote pupils' very good achievement in this aspect of their learning. Pupils are proud of their artwork and the high quality displays throughout the school celebrate their achievement. During the inspection pupils made good progress in composing and performing in music; others were thoroughly absorbed in a dance session, taught by a visiting specialist, in which they made excellent progress and were able to perform a complex dance routine with great skill and enthusiasm.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding, whilst their cultural development is good. The promotion of healthy lifestyles is outstanding and the pupils are extremely positive about the opportunities provided for physical activities. The school is rightly proud of their Healthy Schools Award which reflects their success in this aspect of provision. The staff team work very hard to provide a safe and secure learning environment. Students thoroughly enjoy their time at school, confirmed by many positive comments from parents, and pupils' attendance is good. There are very high levels of mutual respect which help to promote pupils' excellent behaviour. They make a good contribution to the school and local community through, for example, the work of the school councils. The pupils would like to see improvements to the school buildings and further developments in their outdoor play facilities. They work well in pairs and teams which helps them prepare for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Typically, teaching is enthusiastic with high expectations which ensure that the students are effectively challenged and achieve well. The staff know the students well and work very effectively together promoting a happy and purposeful learning environment. This gives the pupils the security and confidence to learn from their mistakes and make good progress. The teaching assistants provide a good balance of support and challenge to help boost pupils' learning. The effective use of assessment data ensures that the work for most pupils is neither too easy nor too hard. However, on occasions, there are limitations in the planning of activities in class. In particular, pupils' learning is not linked to their assessment levels and, as a result, they make satisfactory rather than good progress. A wide range of resources and carefully considered strategies ensures that the pupils' full range of learning needs is met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. In most lessons pupils' activities are carefully tailored to meet their learning needs and, as a result, they thoroughly enjoy their education and achieve well. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in the provision of accredited courses for the older pupils. Good opportunities are provided to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in all subjects. Pupils' preparation for their lives as young adults is also effectively promoted in their enterprise activities. The school shares teaching expertise with a

local special school and high school and keeps up-to-date with curriculum developments. The arrangement also encourages the sharing of resources. The school has made a brisk start in promoting their specialist status in the arts and is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development and achievement. Pupils' learning is enriched by the contribution of visitors to the school and their wide range of educational visits. The provision of activities after school is appreciated by the pupils. The staff team ensures that limitations in the accommodation do not restrict the pupils' curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The high level of staff commitment encourages pupils to enjoy, achieve and thrive in a stimulating environment. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. Within this safe and supportive environment pupils make good progress towards well documented and challenging targets. The strong focus on promoting good attendance is effective. Behaviour management has improved since the last inspection and is now consistent with clear rewards and consequences which are understood by the pupils. Pupils are clear that bullying is not acceptable and they have the confidence to talk with staff if they have any concerns. The school works very well with other agencies to ensure that pupils have maximum access to their learning. Links with parents are very good and they made many very positive comments about the care and support provided by the staff. The school effectively manages the limited space available for the picking up and dropping off of pupils by the taxis.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and leadership team promote a very positive ethos which has helped to develop a cohesive and inclusive school. There is a clear sense of purpose and the success of the school has been recognised in their wide array of national awards. The school's self-evaluation grades are generally consistent with the judgements of the inspector. However, the school's capacity to improve is good rather than outstanding because although their exciting new leadership structure is a developing strength of the school, it will take time to make a difference. Leadership across the school is shared and this helps to drive forward improvement. The governing body makes a good contribution to leadership and management with a balance of support and challenge to senior leaders. The school is very ambitious but has too many priorities in the school improvement plan rather than focussing on a manageable number. The school has a wealth of data which is used to establish challenging targets for pupils' achievement and personal development. The strong focus on the staff's professional development ensures that the pupils' wide range of learning needs is met. Links and partnerships with other schools are good which help to promote good opportunities for the pupils to learn alongside their mainstream peers. The school places a high priority on providing good value for money.

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?	2	2
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?	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2	

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	2
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	2	

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kilton Thorpe School, Redcar and Cleveland, TS12 2UW

I thoroughly enjoyed my inspection of your school. You made me feel very welcome and particular thanks to the pupils that gave up part of their lunch break to talk with me. I was impressed with many aspects of your work. For example, the dance session was brilliant. Also, your artwork makes very attractive displays.

This is what I found out about your school.

- Your headteacher, staff and governors work well together to ensure that you get a good education. They look after you exceptionally well.
- You clearly enjoy your time in school and make excellent progress in your personal development. You are encouraged to be healthy and enjoy your physical activities.
- Staff have a good understanding of the things you are good at and the areas where you need help and this helps you to make good progress. It is good that some of you have the chance to spend time in a mainstream school.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with an outstanding start to their education.
- Students in the sixth form have a good education and make good progress in their work and personal development.

Even though I thought your school was good it could still be improved by tackling the following things.

- The sixth form students do not have the opportunity to take part in enough courses in other schools or colleges.
- I have asked that staff ensure that all of your work is neither too easy nor too hard.
- The school are trying to improve lots of things and I have asked that they concentrate on a few important areas to improve the school.

You can play your part by continuing to attend school regularly and by working as hard as you already do.

Best wishes

David Smith

Lead inspector