

# Holgate Meadows Community Special School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126712
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	341002
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rosemary Eaton

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Allcroft
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Tony Middleton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Lindsay Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S5 7WE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons each taught by a different teacher. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding and equalities policies, records relating to pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, and information about the curriculum. Inspectors analysed the responses to staff and pupils' questionnaires and the 12 parents and carers questionnaires returned.

- the school's work to improve attendance and evidence of its impact
  - the effectiveness with which pupils' progress and development are tracked and the use teachers and leaders make of this information
  - the school's success in enabling pupils to manage their own behaviour so they are not over-reliant on adult support
- the way in which middle leaders contribute to school improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school catering for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All the pupils are boys and the local authority has never referred girls to the school. All have a statement of special educational needs. A few pupils have statements in respect of autism and around one in four has learning difficulties in addition to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A very small minority of pupils are looked after children. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is above average. The very large majority of pupils are White British. Most join the school during Key Stage 3 and many have previously been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. An off-site facility, a short distance away, provides an alternative learning environment for a small number of pupils from Holgate Meadows and mainstream schools. At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher was absent. The school has gained the Healthy Schools, Sportsmark and Activemark awards.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This good school places pupils firmly on the road towards a brighter future as responsible members of society. Their behaviour and attitudes improve to such an extent that most go on to further education, training or employment having gained a range of accreditation including GCSE passes. Pupils recognise that they are better able to control their behaviour. They put this down to the way in which staff know them well and are always ready to listen and help. Pupils feel safe in school because they are cared for very well, with outstanding arrangements for safeguarding. This extends to the exhaustive and effective efforts to reduce rates of absence. Although attendance is improving significantly year-on-year, the overall rate is below that expected in secondary schools. It is affected badly by a minority of pupils who resist all encouragement to shake off their history of refusing to attend their previous schools.

When they join the school, the levels at which pupils work are typically much lower than the expectations for their age. They have huge gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding, but additionally lack the attributes necessary for effective learning, for example, the ability to remain in a classroom and follow instructions. Skilful teaching, an engaging curriculum and pastoral support tailored to individual needs enable pupils to make good progress and to a large extent catch up on lost time. Although attainment is low at the end of Year 11, this nevertheless represents strong improvement from pupils' starting points and their achievement is good.

A range of rigorous monitoring activities provides senior and middle leaders with an accurate and detailed view of the school's performance. They use this information effectively to move the school forward. For example, teaching has improved in response to the school's consistent expectation that the main thrust of lessons is to promote learning, rather than focusing predominantly on managing behaviour. Teachers now always ensure pupils understand what they are to learn, so there is a sense of purpose at the start of lessons and, at the end, the satisfaction of a job well done. There is less consistency when it comes to providing additional challenge for the higher attaining pupils. All staff have opportunities to lead initiatives and their willingness to work together for pupils' benefit contributes to the school's good capacity to sustain improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by extending the school's capacity to make alternative provision for the most resistant pupils.
- Ensure that teaching consistently requires higher attaining pupils to work at

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sufficiently high levels.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Other than those who are very new to the school, pupils arrive at lessons ready and willing to work. They concentrate well and are generally keen to volunteer their ideas during discussions, listening sensibly to each other. Although some still need significant prompting to complete tasks, most are prepared to work independently and persevere. Those who are accustomed to the school's approaches welcome advice about how to improve their work and reflect on their own performance and behaviour. Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities, but their willingness to use and improve their writing skills is striking and reflects their positive attitudes to learning.

Assessment data reveals a strongly improving trend in attainment. In 2009, the proportion of Year 11 pupils gaining at least one GCSE pass rose significantly and was close to the national average. A small minority typically gain five or more passes. Nearly all achieve nationally recognised accreditation in English and mathematics. The school's expectations for each pupil's progress are ambitious and are often met. All groups, including looked after children, those from minority ethnic groups and those with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils with autism sometimes progress faster than others because their learning skills tend to be better established when they join the school. Unsurprisingly, pupils whose attendance is poor achieve significantly less well than others.

Despite pupils' behavioural difficulties, the school presents a calm and orderly learning environment. Any outbursts of aggressive behaviour seldom affect the learning and well-being of others. Pupils confirm the school's records, reporting that bullying does occur from time to time, but they do not perceive this to be a cause for concern. They know exactly how they should respond and are confident that staff do their best to deal with any problems. Very positive working relationships mean that all pupils have an adult with whom they can discuss their concerns. Pupils appreciate the requirements of a healthy lifestyle, understanding why the food on offer at lunch and snack times is not fried. They greatly enjoy physical activities and frequently play football or ride bikes during free time. Pupils do jobs to help staff, and the school council provides an opportunity for more formal responsibilities. Involvement in projects, such as planting trees in the locality is increasing, enabling pupils to contribute to the wider community. Although pupils make good progress in vital areas such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and in most aspects of their personal development, the poor attendance of a minority restricts their potential for economic well-being in the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

In most lessons, changes of activity keep pupils interested and maintain a good pace of learning. Teachers use questions effectively, to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to speak out and clarify their thoughts. Resources, including interactive whiteboards, and practical activities are frequently used well to help pupils grasp new ideas or to reinforce learning. In a science lesson, Year 10 pupils' understanding of the functions of food additives was strengthened significantly through conducting an investigation into the use of egg yolk as an emulsifier. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for individual pupils. They step in to help when necessary but whenever possible give pupils space to be independent learners. Behaviour is managed well, classroom teams working together to ensure that as far as possible learning can proceed without interruption. Strategies such as reminders about personal targets and awarding points which lead to rewards often help to keep pupils focused. Lessons offer scope for all pupils to work at the levels of which they are capable. Sometimes, although higher attaining pupils are expected to be more independent than others, the work they are given is not sufficiently challenging.

Pupils speak approvingly about the many enrichment activities on offer, such as visits, which include residential. After-school clubs include football, film and construction and are popular with pupils. The curriculum meets their needs well as they move up through the school, reflecting the requirements for each key stage. Throughout the school, the strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is effective in supporting learning across the curriculum. For example, because their writing and reading improve so well, pupils are able to make better progress in other subjects.

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Learning opportunities are frequently specific to individuals with interventions resulting from the rigorous tracking of progress. For instance, Key Stage 4 pupils with sensory impairments are offered courses at specialist colleges in order for them to gain suitable accreditation. In the off-site provision, pupils often attend part-time, following individual programmes carefully matched to their needs. Opportunities for older pupils to gain accreditation are increasing year-on-year. The school is now working to develop more links with colleges to extend the options at Key Stage 4 and to encourage more of the reluctant pupils to attend.

The school goes to extraordinary lengths to support pupils whose attendance is poor. For example, staff make home visits to check on pupils' well-being and offer tuition in pupils' homes. All pupils have attendance targets and teachers and teaching assistants take every opportunity to encourage, cajole and reward progress towards these. The off-site provision enables a small number of reluctant pupils to learn in a more flexible and less formal environment and the school is keen to extend this facility. As a result of the school's efforts, attendance is rising but remains low. The school works hard to engage with all parents and carers. Each receives a weekly update on their child's progress in addition to regular phone calls from staff. Extensive and flexible transition arrangements are put in place to support new pupils who may have been out of formal education for long periods. Very good partnerships with a range of agencies enhance the provision for looked after children and the most vulnerable pupils. Pupil review meetings at the end of each day enable staff to share observations and concerns. Exclusions are used as a last resort and rates are reducing. They are employed only to define right and wrong and to protect others, not to manage challenging behaviour.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and other senior leaders provide insightful and committed leadership. They welcome innovation and encourage others to take the initiative in improving provision and pupils' outcomes. All staff have the opportunity to set up a school improvement company, working to support the whole-school plan. As a result, for example, Holgate Hens', 'The Aspirational Display Company', and an anti-bullying project are up and running, providing clear evidence of leaders' success in embedding ambition and driving improvement. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. A close eye is kept on the performance and engagement of different groups of pupils and steps are

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taken to ensure that none are disadvantaged. Work has recently begun to provide specific enrichment activities to support the small group of Black African heritage pupils. Until recently, the school has focused its attention on successfully creating a cohesive school community but it is increasingly working in the wider community. It reaches out to other schools by offering expertise and places at the off-site provision and pupils have growing links with the local community. For example, Year 10 pupils now work each week with park rangers, to develop local facilities. The school has a clear and unequivocal focus on safeguarding its pupils. No stone is left unturned in ensuring the protection of all pupils, in particular those who are particularly vulnerable. Compelling evidence reveals the school's outstanding success in protecting individual pupils. Governors make a strong contribution to safeguarding, particularly through the professional expertise of the vice-chair of the governing body.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Views of parents and carers**

The number of questionnaires returned was very low. They generally painted a positive picture of the school, which inspectors could agree with. A few parents and carers raised issues relating to their own experience of the school, which inspection findings did not support. In particular, inspectors could find no evidence to uphold the view that the school encourages pupils to smoke. No-one is permitted to smoke on school premises.



### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holgate Meadows Community Special School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 12 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 86 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	18	5	45	2	18	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	18	7	64	2	18	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	27	8	73	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	9	82	1	9	1	9
The teaching is good at this school	1	9	9	82	0	0	1	9
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	9	9	82	1	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	8	73	2	18	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	2	18	8	73	1	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	18	7	64	1	9	1	9
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	27	5	45	3	27	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	18	7	64	2	18	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	27	6	55	0	0	1	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	27	6	55	1	9	1	9

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



25 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holgate Meadows Community Special School, Sheffield, S5 7WE

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we inspected your school. Special thanks go to the boys who talked to us about the school. These discussions were very helpful. We were very impressed by some of the writing we saw on display and in your books. You told us you think that the school is good and we agree with you.

Here are some of the things that the school does well:

- there are excellent arrangements to keep you safe
- your behaviour improves a great deal during your time at the school
- you make good progress in your learning and the oldest pupils gain certificates, including GCSE's
- you told us how much you enjoyed visits and clubs; we agree that you have a good curriculum
- teaching is good
- your headteacher and the staff work hard to keep the school improving, because they want you to have the best education possible.

I have asked the school to do two things to help it get even better:

- keep working with you to improve your attendance. You can each help by attending school regularly and telling the staff if you have any good ideas that might encourage others to come to school more often
- make sure that in every lesson you are all given work that is hard enough.

I send all the adults in school and each one of you my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Rosemary Eaton

Lead Inspector

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