

North Ridge Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135548
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	341668
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Gina White HMI

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Canon Peter Ingram
Headteacher	Mr M Wright
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Tenter Balk Lane Adwick-le-Street Woodlands DN6 7EF
Telephone number	01302 720790
Fax number	01302 720799
Email address	admin@northridge.doncaster.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 12 lessons, taught by 10 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding policies and documentation, tracking of pupils' progress, case studies and school plans. Questionnaires from pupils, staff and 91 parents and carers were scrutinised.

- how well the school is achieving its aims and how successfully they are demonstrated in pupils' outcomes
- the impact of curricular provision in providing breadth and relevance to pupils learning and their achievement
- the impact of the provision for care, guidance and support in removing barriers to pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

The school opened in September 2008 as an all through special school providing Early Years Foundation Stage, Primary, Secondary and Sixth form provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The school moved to its current purpose-built accommodation in January 2009 and is co-located with Outwood Academy. The school draws pupils from across the whole of the Doncaster metropolitan borough area. Well above average numbers of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds, with a few pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds and at early stages of acquiring English. A small number of pupils are in local authority care. The school gained the Healthy Schools award in 2009.

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

North Ridge is a good school with a friendly and happy working atmosphere. The school provides an outstanding level of personal care, guidance and support to pupils and their families. One parent described this support as: 'Above and beyond, nothing is too much trouble'. Relationships and trust between the school, pupils, parents and carers is strong and deeply embedded. The school works exceptionally well with parents and carers and almost all are involved in their child's learning through annual reviews and on a daily basis.

Consistent behaviour strategies and high quality individual support for speech and language are enabling all pupils to develop and to improve their communication skills. This improves their readiness for learning and pupils with the most challenging needs move securely and make good progress from experiencing to taking an increasingly more active role in lessons. Teaching is effective in engaging pupils and they enjoy lessons: pupils respond with increasing confidence and independence and achieve well across a range of subjects.

Due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities the attainment of pupils on entry to the school and when they leave is low. The school's detailed analysis of assessment data shows that the vast majority of pupils, in all classes, make good progress towards achieving challenging targets in mathematics and English. Older students are achieving well to develop skills for independent living and to gain externally accredited qualifications in Year 11 and in the sixth form. Pupils' excellent behaviour underpins their good progress in lessons and is demonstrated in their confidence as they move around the school and in their increasing social skills, for example, in the friendly way sixth form students greet each other at the breakfast club. Most pupils say they feel safe, and most attend school regularly, although a few pupils are persistently absent. Absences are insufficiently analysed. Pupils' contribution to their local communities is outstanding. They are active fund raisers and run a community café, grow and provide fresh vegetables for the community and participate in a school library loan service for retired local residents. Such work contributes to community cohesion but the school is not evaluating the impact of the strategies sufficiently.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' learning, and to developing their familiarity with the wider world. Pupils say, 'there is a lot to do' and many enjoy working on the computers, taking part in visits and horse riding. Positive relationships with the local secondary school are well established and the joint production of 'Oliver' provided opportunities for pupils to amaze their parents with their capacity for absorbing new learning experiences. The sixth form curriculum is outstanding, as it prepares students well for maximum independence in adult life. Excellent partnerships have been forged

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with local support agencies and the contribution of a wide range of partners adds significantly to pupils' well-being and learning.

The school is well led and governed. Self-evaluation is accurate and improvement plans set a clear guide for the school's future development. Consistent assessment and monitoring practices are established. Consequently, senior leaders have a good picture of pupils' progress and of teaching and learning, but it is not sufficiently sharp in identifying what needs to happen in teaching and learning for pupils to make even more progress. The school is successfully achieving its aims to improve the outcomes for pupils, and the progress made in the short time since the school opened demonstrates good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Evaluate the impact of its strategies to improve community cohesion.
- Improve attendance, by analysing the causes of absence more robustly.
- Refine the evaluation of teaching and learning so that the senior leadership team are able to identify what pupils need to do to make even swifter progress

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The school uses a commercial database to analyse the small steps in progress that pupils make. Recently, senior leaders have begun to use a national system to compare the progress of its pupils against others in similar schools and moderation arrangements are established with local schools. This data demonstrates that most pupils are making better than expected progress. The school is increasingly able to redirect support to those who are not moving forward as quickly and is beginning to analyse results by different groups of pupils. Pupils are well supported to play an increasingly significant role in contributing to their own learning through annual reviews. Almost all pupils can give their view. In discussions with inspectors, pupils recognised the progress they have made since starting at the school: they say they are happier, relaxed and less anxious, are learning more and like being in different sets for mathematics and English. Pupils' good take-up of regular and varied sporting activities and participation in the daily breakfast club encourage healthy lifestyles. Pupils' moral and social development is strong and they are keen to help others. The school's leaders and managers are planning more opportunities to promote pupils' cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and support staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and lessons are planned well around their individual objectives and targets. Lessons are managed effectively and activities are generally pitched well. Pupils visibly gain confidence and self-esteem and are proud of their accomplishments, for example, in writing their name, persevering to master the cutting of a sandwich and counting to five. Very good collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that these achievements are recorded. Occasionally, lessons could be more challenging, particularly for those pupils who meet their targets.

The curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' needs, whilst ensuring access to a breadth of subjects and a very wide range of real world experiences, particularly at Key Stage 3 and 4. The curriculum is enriched through a wealth of activities ranging from Tai Chi to cooking. The school knows that opportunities to build better links between subjects, particularly numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum, are required and plans are in hand to tackle this.

The excellent facilities and the effective use of resources are used to good effect to support learning.

Care, guidance and support are of the highest quality. Secure systems are in place for pastoral support and care of pupils: their happiness and well-being are of high importance. Care and support meet the needs of pupils on a day-to-day basis and during periods of crisis. Partnerships with a range of agencies, including respite care, contribute effectively to keeping vulnerable pupils engaged in learning. Striking examples abound of the impact this excellent provision has on pupils' development. It is

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best summed up by the parents and carers: 'My child is becoming ready to learn, confident and able to interact with his peer group'. The school has become the first place parents and carers turn to in times of greatest need: 'The helpful advice and sharing of strategies between school and home has helped me to communicate with my child'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's vision and aims for the school are squarely based on developing pupils' independence, enabling them to become familiar with the wider world and developing skills to support them in adult life. This ambition underpins the school's work, is shared widely by governors, senior leaders and staff and drives planning and decision making in the school. Senior leaders have overcome issues in establishing the new school through anticipating difficulties and resolving them quickly. The school's work to engage and support parents and carers is first rate, and the school's decision to organise travel arrangements for pupils has their full support. Teaching and learning are improving and are monitored effectively. Performance monitoring and realistic target setting are developing strongly and draw appropriately upon national and local sources of guidance. The finer analysis of pupils' academic progress is not sufficiently embedded but is being tackled, and is a key priority in the well focused school improvement plan. Governors are closely involved in the school and meet their responsibilities effectively. They are providing challenge and support equally, and their role in evaluating the schools work is developing. The school adopts good practice across all aspects of safeguarding and effective measures are in place. Equal opportunities are promoted well in policy and in practice. A strong emphasis on creating a cohesive community is established within the school and in the practical activities that reach out into the community. The school's action plan is clear and well focused on building local partnerships, but there is limited evaluation of the impact of this work. The school's facilities and use of resources have an extremely positive impact on pupils' achievement and value for money is good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children arrive at the school with well below average starting points. They make good progress in their personal development and towards the early learning goals through well planned activities that are highly focused on the needs of each child. In a short time children have settled to new routines, are happy and feel secure. They respond well to the stimulating environment, and are beginning to join in singing and counting activities. All children make good progress in developing more independence and try to do things for themselves such as stand up, push vehicles around the outdoor track and play unaided. Children's learning and welfare needs are met effectively and adults work well together to ensure individuals have the opportunity to achieve as well as they can. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Excellent links are established with parents and carers. The recent investment in resources, particularly for outdoor play, is used to good effect to provide a stimulating and secure environment.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

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Students are welcoming and friendly; they support each other very well and are growing steadily in confidence and independence. They make good progress towards their learning targets. Achieving these is a strong motivator and students are provided with good support and challenge to meet them. Teaching is consistently good. The curriculum is outstanding: it is well managed and provides a superb range of opportunities that are sufficiently flexible to meet students' developing and changing needs. Strong credibility and support for progress is provided in the extensive range of accreditation. A wide range of enrichment activities, sheltered working and good advice and guidance help to prepare students for their next step. Leadership of the sixth form is good and students are clearly involved in decision making. However, parents and carers receive less information than they would like about the progress and development of their child.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. A few expressed concern about various issues and a number want to receive more information on their children's progress. Inspectors investigated this and the school is keen to improve this aspect in the sixth form.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Ridge Community 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 106 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	73	23	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	74	75	22	22	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	64	32	32	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	60	36	36	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	69	26	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	53	41	41	3	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	64	65	28	28	4	4	1	1
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)	54	55	37	37	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	68	30	30	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	60	35	35	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	59	36	36	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	65	66	32	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	70	25	25	1	1	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for your help when we visited your school on 25 and 26 May. You made us feel welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and learning about your school. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

- North Ridge is a good school because it is helping you to make good progress in your work. We could see that you are developing self-confidence and independence. You told us how you feel happy and safe at school.
- Care, guidance and support at your school are outstanding. Staff have helped many of you to overcome difficulties in communication.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is first class.
- The school works really well with your parents and carers.
- Teaching is good. You told us that you are learning a lot and we saw how hard you work in lessons.
- Relationships are really good and every one works hard to make yours a good school.
- The headteacher, governors and all who lead your school are doing a good job and they have achieved a lot in the short time the school has been open.

To make your school even better we have asked the governors to do the following:

- to improve attendance. You can help by doing all that you can to make sure you catch the minibus in the morning
- check what impact its work is having so that it can do even better in improving the community links, help you to make even better progress and to find out why some of you are not attending school regularly.

Yours sincerely,

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