

# Hollybank School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107796
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	377648
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Hilary Ward

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>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	26
<b>Of which number on roll in the sixth form</b>	14
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Wathen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lyn Pollard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Roe Head Far Common Road Mirfield WF14 0DQ
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Hilary Ward

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching in eight lessons led by five teachers and a higher-level teaching assistant. Sessions led by multi-disciplinary professionals and support staff were also observed. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, with a group of staff, with parents and carers and with students. Discussions were also held with the social care inspectors. The inspector looked at documents including curriculum planning, school improvement plans, governing body minutes, external consultant reports and individual education plans. The inspector analysed the eight parent and carer questionnaires returned together with 12 from members of staff.

## Information about the school

Hollybank School is a small special school. The school is a service within Hollybank Trust, a charity which runs education and care services for children and adults with disabilities. Students have profound and multiple learning difficulties and associated conditions including physical disabilities, significant communication difficulties and complex medical conditions, some of which may be life limiting. All students have a statement of special educational needs and are placed by local authorities mainly from across the north of England. A high proportion of students are in the care of their local authority. At present all students are of White British origin. Very few students are under the age of 11. The school, parents and carers and students refer to the sixth form as post-16 provision and this term is used in the report.

The majority of students live in the children's and young adults' homes run by the charity and most students move on to the Trust's adult services when they leave school. Hollybank Children's Home is subject to a separate inspection which was undertaken at the same time. The report can be viewed on the Ofsted website.

The school holds a number of awards including the Green Flag Eco Award, Research Charter Mark and ICT Mark and has specialist school status in the physical and sensory strand.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

### Key Findings

- Hollybank is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because, although teaching is good, there is not a high enough proportion of outstanding teaching.
- Students achieve well over time and make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. They achieve particularly well in their communication skills and in their personal and social development because staff know and understand the differing needs of students very well and are quick to respond to their signals.
- Teachers are developing a new curriculum which is beginning to be linked more precisely to the learning needs of individual students. Although all students have clear learning objectives, these are not always sufficiently broken down to enable teaching assistants to have a clear view of what each student is expected to achieve in the lesson.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Students clearly enjoy coming to school and have excellent attitudes to learning. They feel safe because of the friendships they develop and the outstanding care and support they receive. The multi-disciplinary teams work seamlessly to ensure the complex medical and therapeutic needs of students are met exceptionally well.
- The post-16 department is good. Outcomes are good but personalised learning is less well developed than in the rest of the school and whole-class teaching does not always ensure all students are involved in all parts of the lesson. These students enjoy a curriculum which prepares them well for their adult lives.
- Leadership and management, including that of the governing body, are good. Leaders have reviewed the school's provision and taken steps to make changes which are starting to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement further. Leaders use performance management well to develop staff to meet these heightened expectations. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral,

social and cultural development is outstanding because it is a consistent focus of the school's work.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to be more consistently outstanding by:
  - further developing personalised learning, especially at post-16, to ensure all students are engaged in all parts of their lessons
  - identifying exactly what each student is to learn in every lesson to help staff to assess learning and progress accurately.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are of the opinion that their children are making good progress and the inspection findings agree with this. The school compares its results with other special schools, which indicates that, while students' attainment is very low on entry and when students leave, all groups are making better progress than those in similar schools. Many students are admitted at older ages and often make rapid progress because their therapeutic and medical needs, as well as their learning needs, are so well met. Students who have regressive conditions are supported to maintain skills through carefully structured individual programmes.

The introduction of personalised programmes is enabling students to develop essential skills, including those in literacy and numeracy, with objectives which are well matched to their individual needs. However, the objectives are not always broken down sufficiently to enable precise assessment to take place in each lesson and hence identify each student's next steps in learning. Personalised learning is now well established in the main school, where it is clear that students' achievement is improving rapidly, but has only recently been introduced in the post-16 department where the individual approach is not yet so consistently effective. However, from Key Stage 4 and into post-16, students gain external awards in modules such as numeracy, information and communication technology, creative arts, home management and communication.

The outstanding care and support students receive enables them to make significant strides in their personal and social development, and parents and carers agree with this. Students make particularly good progress in developing communication and social skills because these areas are recognised as being so important to their well-being. They are a focus in all aspects of the school's work. Through a multi-disciplinary approach the best mode of communication is found for each student including symbols, talking mats, switches or more sophisticated communication aids. Some students demonstrated how well they make use of their communication by expressing their very positive thoughts and feelings about being at the school. They enjoy their learning and persevere with tasks, concentrating throughout lessons and cooperating well with adults who support them.

The school has high expectations for its students and never supposes that they cannot achieve challenging targets. For example, two students admitted at a younger age are beginning to demonstrate letter and even word recognition in the early stages of learning to read. Because so many students are achieving the targets set for them, senior leaders and managers have recently revised assessment procedures to introduce more challenging targets and to break down levels of progress further to ensure very small steps are acknowledged.

### **Quality of teaching**

The inspection confirms parents' and carers' view that teaching is good. Staff consider the needs and interests of every individual student and this is reflected in the introduction of personalised learning. Sometimes, whole-class teaching currently means that some students wait for their turn and are not always involved in all parts of their lessons. However, teachers are becoming more proficient in planning for individuals rather than for whole-class teaching. Teaching assistants are also becoming increasingly effective in their role as educators. Shared planning with residential staff and with supporting professionals ensures students can access a broad range of subjects adapted to meet individual needs, interests and abilities. The multi-disciplinary teams ensure students' well-being so that they are ready and able to learn.

All staff contribute well to evaluating and assessing students' progress, although sometimes expected learning outcomes are not specific enough. The revised curriculum focuses teachers' planning on key areas of development which have been identified as being particularly well matched to the needs of the students at Hollybank: communication, personal and social development, and thinking, creative and scientific skills. The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because teachers thread these aspects through all areas of the curriculum. For example, during one afternoon students were involved in a range of activities to promote personal development. These included making gifts and cards to raise money for Water Aid, a horticulture session, a cultural activity linked to India and rebound therapy, while older students were out visiting a museum of photography.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Students want to be in school and demonstrate their enjoyment in lessons. Access to excellent medical and therapeutic services from the Trust's own staff minimises absences for external appointments. Even though some students may have to spend lengthy periods in hospital, attendance is average overall and above average for most students.

Students enjoy exceptionally positive and respectful relationships with staff and this helps them to feel very safe and well cared for. This was reflected in the responses students made in the meeting with the inspector which were very sensitively interpreted by staff. One parent put this view succinctly: 'The people involved with my child consider her special needs with compassion, discretion and great care'. Parents and carers are extremely positive about behaviour and safety.

Staff across school and residence share information, thoughts and ideas very effectively to ensure a consistent approach to management and to follow up any concerns at an early stage. Staff are highly skilled at recognising welfare issues and deal with them immediately so that disruption to students' learning is minimised. Students are supported to express their thoughts and feelings through a range of innovative technologies such as iMuse, the sensory room, talking mats and other aids to communication. These help students to feel they have some control over their lives and to express needs, likes and dislikes.

Behaviour never disrupts lessons, although a few students have behaviour management plans mainly to prevent incidents of self-harm. These are implemented very effectively to enable participation in activities. The teaching of issues such as bullying and friendships are of vital importance, particularly to students who are unable to go home very often, and are included in the excellent personal, social, health and citizenship education programmes which are threaded through all aspects of the curriculum. There are no recorded instances of bullying.

### **Leadership and management**

Senior leaders and managers, including the governing body, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They communicate high expectations and ambition through very effective self-evaluation and the consolidation of the school's performance demonstrates leaders' good capacity to continue to move the school forward. The recently reviewed curriculum is broad and balanced and meets students' needs well, with the potential for improving outcomes further as it becomes more established. There is good coverage of the National Curriculum, appropriately adapted to focus on key areas of development. Progression to a more independent and life-skills approach in post-16, for example through learning to use switches to operate household equipment, prepares students for transition to adult life well. The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent use is made of the community, with students making frequent visits to places of cultural and spiritual interest as well as exploring moral and social issues through work, for instance in obtaining the Green Flag Eco Award. The school enjoys links with local mainstream schools which provide opportunities for inclusion, where appropriate, and staff deliver training about disability in the community to improve access for disabled people.

Senior leaders monitor teaching and learning and students' progress very well and analyse the data to inform changes to provision. Some changes, such as personalised programmes, are very new but, as a result of the improved outcomes already demonstrated, senior leaders have recognised the need to set more ambitious targets, particularly in basic skills including communication. Effective performance management ensures the professional development of staff keeps up with the changes to the curriculum so that staff are confident in their roles as educators as well as carers.

Leaders, managers and members of the governing body ensure policies and procedures to safeguard students are robust. Risk assessments are undertaken for all activities and recorded effectively by specialist staff. The school is a highly inclusive community and the focus on every student as an individual ensures equality of

opportunity and an absence of discrimination. Partnerships with parents and carers can sometimes be difficult when many live at a distance from the school and for those whose children are unable to go home very often. Nevertheless, residential and school staff work together to find innovative ways to involve parents in their child's education, such as offering workshops, making phone calls and use of the website, as well as home-school books.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



15 June 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Hollybank School, Mirfield, WF14 0DQ**

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school this week. A particular thank you goes to the students who took the trouble to communicate their thoughts and feelings about the school. These are a few of the things I found:

- Hollybank is a good school.
- You feel very safe and well cared for. You develop excellent relationships with staff, who provide you with outstanding care and support because they understand your different needs so well.
- The new personalised programmes are meeting your learning needs better and are helping you to achieve more.
- You are given lots of opportunities to go out into the community and enjoy new experiences.
- Your leaders and managers are constantly seeking ways to help you to achieve more.

I have asked your teachers to think about two things which I hope will make things even better for you:

- To make sure you are all involved in the whole of each lesson by continuing to develop the new learning programmes, especially at post-16.
- To be very clear about exactly what they want each of you to learn in every session so that they can better judge the progress you are making.

I am sure you will continue to learn and be happy at Hollybank, and thank you again for your welcome.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Ward  
Lead Inspector

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