

Springhead School

Barry's Lane, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO12 4HA

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development flourishes in this outstanding school, which since the time of the last inspection has gone from strength to strength.
- Regardless of their starting points, age or background, pupils now make securely good progress and for most, it is outstanding.
- By the time they leave school, students attain many awards, celebrating their excellent achievements.
- The sixth form is outstanding and effectively builds upon the excellent practice in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- One reason why pupils learn well is that so much of the teaching they receive is outstanding.
- Teachers and support staff share their passion for learning and provide exciting work for pupils to do in lessons.
- Behaviour around the school is impeccable. Pupils are friendly and kind towards one another. A good sense of humour, between pupils and staff, permeates through the school.
- Pupils display outstanding attitudes to learning and concentrate very hard to achieve well. They are encouraged to solve problems together and delight in the success of their friends.
- Following the last inspection, school leaders acted swiftly to address all the areas for improvement. Many of these have now become strengths within the school, including the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher provides determined leadership, promoting an uncompromising focus on continuous improvement. She offers teachers, parents, governors and pupils a very clear vision of what an outstanding school should be.
- She has established highly effective senior and middle leadership teams. Together, they are ambitious – determined that this safe and caring school continues to improve.
- Robust procedures, now firmly established, provide leaders with a very clear view of what is working well and what can be better still.
- Highly experienced governors carry out their duties exceptionally well to ensure all pupils receive the best possible education and care.
- Leaders have recently developed a new way of teaching English and mathematics for students in the sixth form. Currently too few students attain externally recognised awards in these subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations in 12 lessons, all of which were conducted jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher. Inspectors also observed a number of small-group or one-to-one activities, including in the hydrotherapy pool. Inspectors observed teaching and learning at The Street, the Learning Zone and the beach hut (off-site provisions).
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and school staff. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work in lessons, looked at books, listened to pupils read and met with a group of students.
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses to the online survey (Parent View). Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and received two letters to consider.
- Inspectors also took account of the 45 inspection questionnaires returned by members of the school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at progress data, performance management information, records relating to behaviour and safety, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jim Alexander, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

James Kilner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Springhead School is a specialist school for cognition and learning.
- Pupils have a wide range of learning needs, including severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Many also have a broad range of additional needs such as autism or complex medical needs. A number also present challenging behavioural difficulties.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is much higher than average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for children who are looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.)
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and two primary classes are taught in specialist classrooms adjacent to The Hinderwell Primary Academy.
- Students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are taught in the main school and also attend regular sessions at a multi-sensory off-site provision (The Learning Zone).
- Students in the sixth form are either taught in the main school or in an off-site provision (The Street). Leaders have recently established a transition class to help students move from Key Stage 4 to the sixth form.
- During the summer term, the school leases a beach hut to convert into an outdoor classroom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Successfully implement the improvements being planned to improve the English and mathematics ability of students, to ensure attainment rises still further by the end of the sixth form in these subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are much lower than those typical for their age. Many other pupils start school in different year groups, including the sixth form. Their standards of attainment are also exceptionally low.
- Regardless of their starting points, all pupils, including the most able, are helped to settle exceptionally quickly, develop fantastic attitudes to learning and soon make the most of what this outstanding school has to offer.
- Across the school, pupils make at least good progress, for example, in their reading, writing and mathematics, and for many it is excellent. By the time students leave the sixth form, they attain many externally recognised awards. These were celebrated at the Annual Achievement Award ceremony during the inspection, a highlight of which was a wonderful 'flash mob' dance by those leaving this year to attend further education courses.
- Too few students currently leave the sixth form with externally recognised awards in English and mathematics. As a result, school leaders have been developing a new way of teaching these subjects. This is yet to commence but everything is ready for this to be started in September.
- There are no underachieving groups and all make much faster progress from their starting points than typically expected. This is because teachers plan carefully and cater for the wide range of individual needs within their class. As a result, pupils who are sensory learners, supported learners, or who are able to work more independently make the same excellent progress in their learning. This typifies the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination.
- Creative use is made of a wide range of resources to improve the quality of experience pupils receive. For example, pupils in the Primary 2 class were using the beach hut as an outside classroom to develop their problem-solving skills and reinforce the mathematics concept of capacity. The task was to measure and then weigh half a litre of water, but there was a hole in the bucket! What were they to do? Pupils supported and encouraged one another to find a solution. Their impressive determination and good humour were a delight to observe. Inspectors understand why pupils say 'Teachers make lessons fun.'
- The pupil premium funding is used well. As a result, those who are looked after by the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals make the same excellent progress and attain as well in English and mathematics as others in the school.
- School leaders use the Year 7 catch-up fund well to ensure eligible students make the same excellent progress as others in the school.
- Achievement is equally as outstanding for pupils who attend the beach hut or when students attend the Learning Zone or The Street facilities.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught very well to learn and play together. They thoroughly enjoy learning through play, both indoors and outside. Staff are skilled at asking the right questions to prompt children's thinking. Learning activities are designed with the individual child in mind and adults are very skilled at knowing when to press on with a task or when to move on to another.
- Across the whole school, teachers use the outdoor learning environment to great effect. Pupils in the primary classes, for example, were explaining that an unexploded bomb had been found in the vegetable patch, part of the Second World War project.
- Teachers plan meticulously to ensure that all are learning productively in every lesson. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, develop their own way of working but also to support and encourage each other. For example, in a sixth-form cookery lesson, students were using what they knew of weights and measures to prepare some (home-grown) rhubarb and gooseberry

crumble. The support students gave one another to succeed was impressive.

- All benefit from well-trained and highly experienced teaching assistants, who work alongside teachers ensuring that any pupils who need more support or those that require additional challenge receive the input at the right time.
- Pupils have been taught to reflect upon their learning and are developing the skills to explain what they are finding easy and what they are struggling to understand. This gives teachers the opportunity to provide work at the right level. Teachers and pupils also effectively use technology to support learning.
- The quality of on-going guidance through lessons is excellent. Pupils are exceptionally clear about what they are aiming to improve and how they are going to achieve success.
- High expectations are a common feature in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils to work well and pupils also have high expectations of their teachers to provide interesting activities.
- The teaching of writing is excellent and pupils are provided with opportunities to use what they know of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to write across a wide range of subjects. All take care with their work and are proud of what they achieve.
- The teaching of reading is also a strong feature in the school. Teachers set ambitious targets to be met and pupils are well on the way to achieving these goals.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding and their impressive attitudes to learning are a key reason for the excellent progress that they make in their lessons. For example, students in a Key Stage 4 class settled quickly at the start of the day. They participated well during the signed registration, showed a great deal of respect during the time of collective worship (their singing was wonderful), and moved quickly on to recognising the sign and sound that letters make. As a result, their written work was of a high standard. All this was impressively within the first 25 minutes of the school day.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from very positive relationships established with adults. Children feel safe and secure and soon grow in confidence, developing very good attitudes to work and school life.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now consistently above average. There have been no exclusions in over sixteen years.
- Very good behaviour was seen at playtime and lunchtime and older students were very keen to point out that this was typical. Those who need more support to manage their own behaviour respond very quickly to the help provided.
- Pupils take pride in their school and work on display around the school is of a high quality.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is also outstanding.
- Pupils have been given a range of strategies to keep themselves safe and have a very secure understanding of, for example, e-safety.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and say, 'It doesn't really happen in our school.' Indeed, well-kept school records confirm that any such incidents during the school day are very rare and always very well managed.
- Leaders keep meticulous records, for example, about the administration of medicine or when the safe-space has been used. Parents are kept very well informed of all aspects of health, care, education or behaviour.
- The school does not just keep pupils safe and secure, but also very happy. This is because staff go the extra mile to ensure needs are met. For example, leaders have sourced an all-terrain wheelchair for pupils to 'paddle in the sea' with their friends when at the beach hut outside classroom.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The dynamic headteacher is committed to ensuring that every pupil receives the best possible education and care. To this end, she has fostered the leadership skills of her staff team.
- The headteacher is exceptionally well supported by a highly effective deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. Their crystal-clear plan and uncompromising drive for improvement are shared by all staff.
- It is because of the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, in close collaboration with senior leaders, that all teaching is now securely good and much is outstanding.
- Leaders are highly innovative, fostering very positive partnerships with outside providers. They go the extra mile to support families as well as their children. For example, they make use of a professional counselling service to support family members who may be struggling with sleep deprivation or stress. Parents explained to inspectors that they have a wide range of professionals supporting their children, but 'School is always our first port of call when we need help.'
- A comprehensive process to check the performance of staff is firmly established and regular meetings to check on pupils' progress ensure that teachers are held to account for pupils' achievement in their class.
- The new primary school sport funding is being used to provide a range of activities, for example, extended swimming, as well as to further improve the quality of teaching in physical education lessons. While this is still at a relatively early stage of development, pupils are benefiting from the opportunities to swim and enjoy regular visits to the local sports hall. Staff speak positively about the training they are receiving and recognise the impact on the health and well-being of those who attend the school.
- Middle leaders also play a valuable role in driving forward improvements in their subject areas. They are skilled at providing training for staff and additional support when required. They keep a careful watch on the progress pupils make across the school.
- The curriculum is outstanding. Leaders ensure that a very broad and rich range of activities is provided to enhance the subjects that are being taught in lessons and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils exceptionally well.
- The local authority has full confidence in the school's leadership and considers it only necessary to maintain a light-touch monitoring role. The headteacher is very highly regarded and supports improvement in a number of other schools locally.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and along with senior leaders, has been a major agent in rapid and sustained school improvement since the time of the last inspection. Governors attend training and are exceptionally well informed, bringing a wide range of experience to their work. They offer the right balance of support and challenge to make sure the school continues to improve. They have a clear view of how well the school is performing against other schools nationally. They also have a very secure understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and use performance management procedures to reward good teachers through progression along the pay scale. They are fully involved in decision making about how, for example, the pupil premium funding is used and have developed robust skills to check up on its impact. Safeguarding arrangements are firmly established and this outstanding practice is now shared with other schools locally.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121772
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	442277

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Crossley
Headteacher	Debbie Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2012
Telephone number	01723 367829
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