

# Wakefield Pathways School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133340
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	341378
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 May 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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	45
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Stephen Groves
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne Lawton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Poplar Avenue Townville Castleford WF10 3QJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Five lessons were observed, each taught by a different teacher, and meetings were held with pupils, staff and the Vice Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a variety of policies and other documents, including those related to safeguarding, and records of pupils' learning and progress. The 21 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed as were those completed by staff and pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness with which the school provides for different groups of pupils and monitors their progress
- how well the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has developed since the previous inspection
- the extent of the school's links with the community and the impact these have on pupils' social and cultural development.

## Information about the school

This school caters for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum conditions. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils often join the school at other than the usual times for admissions. Most pupils are White British. The two children in the Reception Year are taught in a class with pupils in Year 1. The school offers outreach support to pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream schools. It has gained the Healthy Schools Award and is a National Autistic Society Accredited School. The deputy headteacher retired earlier in the current academic year. A new appointment has been made with effect from September 2010. Non-registered childcare, owned and managed privately, is accommodated by the school.

**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?**

**1**

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

**1**

### Main findings

Pupils' descriptions of the activities they most enjoy reflect the exceptionally motivating and relevant curriculum offered by Pathways. In addition to relishing exciting experiences, such as horse riding or visiting a funfair, pupils appreciate learning about colours and shapes or how to catch a ball. Their highly positive attitudes stem from a combination of superb care and support, and expert teaching. They feel entirely safe in school, demonstrating total confidence in the staff, who go out of their way to identify and find solutions to any worries or difficulties pupils may have. As a result, new pupils quickly settle and start developing crucial skills such as the ability to sit in a group of other children. Teachers' particular success in enabling them to learn to communicate underpins the outstanding progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Their ever-increasing ability to communicate and their self-confidence have an extremely strong impact on other aspects of pupils' development. For example, they readily join in wide-ranging sporting activities, including taking part in inter-school competitions, with a consequent and significant boost to their health. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are aware of their own feelings and strengths and they choose their friends for their qualities and not their backgrounds. The school council is very active and offers one of many avenues for pupils to make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. Pathway's partnerships with other schools, agencies and groups are extremely effective and the school council recently entertained students from a secondary school, to thank them for their support.

Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to move forward and build on its outstanding performance. Leaders have a highly accurate view of its many areas of strength and perceptively identify where there are opportunities for further development. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and take account of the views of all those concerned with the school, including pupils, parents and carers. Currently, the process of analysing assessment information, for example to compare how well different groups are performing, is time consuming and it is difficult to involve all leaders in this work. A new system to track pupils' progress is just being introduced. All groups of staff share the headteacher's drive, enthusiasm and extremely high aspirations. The school's capacity to continue to move forward is outstanding and it offers excellent value for money.

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

- Use assessment information more efficiently to drive the school's improvement by:

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- fully embedding the new procedures for recording pupils' attainment and tracking their progress
- involving all leaders in analysing the assessment information gathered and in identifying ways forward.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Pupils learn and achieve exceptionally well because they develop their ability both to work with others and to be independent. During activities that involve the whole class, pupils readily take turns. They often consider very carefully before making choices and pay close attention to other pupils and to adults. Many pupils are keen to answer questions using their voice, signs or symbols. Pupils of all ages persevere with individual tasks and regularly need little encouragement to do their best work. Within a relatively short space of time, most of the pupils with particularly complex needs move from needing the constant support of two or more adults to coping without this additional help.

The steps forward taken by individuals in subjects such as English and mathematics often appear tiny but are hugely significant in the light of pupils' starting points and their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Over time, these equate to exceptional progress. Although individual pupils often make faster progress in some areas of learning than others, there are no particular trends other than the consistently strong gains made in learning to communicate. The school's assessment information indicates that all groups of pupils, such as girls, boys and those with the most complex needs, make equally impressive progress. Last year, all the Year 6 pupils met or exceeded their challenging targets in English and mathematics.

Behaviour is good overall and sometimes exemplary, despite the large majority of pupils with significant difficulty in managing their own behaviour. Individual pupils learn to recognise when they are finding it hard to control their impulses and develop strategies to help them cope, for example when in a situation they find too noisy. Those whose diet is very restricted learn to try new foods and to eat more. Pupils fulfil responsibilities such as turning off the lights before the interactive whiteboard is used. Absences are usually the result of ill health or the need to attend medical appointments. The development of their social skills and their improved behaviour enable pupils to benefit from activities in the local and wider community. In turn, these make strong contributions to social and cultural development and to preparing pupils for the next stage in their education.

*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.

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

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers make full use of what they know about what pupils have learned already in order to ensure that lessons are planned exceptionally well to meet the needs of each individual. Resources and activities are organised to enable pupils to learn in the ways that suit them best, with a very strong emphasis on experiences that stimulate different senses. The teams of staff in each classroom work together extremely closely, using their detailed knowledge of each pupil to ensure that individuals are encouraged to communicate and to do as much for themselves as possible. Staff have an expert knowledge of autistic spectrum conditions and make consistent use of effective approaches, such as restricting the vocabulary they use. They strike an excellent balance between whole-class activities and opportunities for pupils to work independently towards their individual targets. Skills, such as exchanging symbols to communicate choices, are taught exceptionally well.

Planning is particularly thorough and thoughtful. As a result, although topics are the same for each class there is excellent provision for pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding to develop systematically as they move up through the school. Subjects are grouped together within areas of learning, enabling teachers to use the available time more creatively in order to meet the needs of the pupils in their class. Visits offer meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn through first-hand experiences and apply their skills. Visitors, such as a drumming teacher and sports coaches, increase the range of provision. After a teacher from a mainstream secondary school took the lead in preparing pupils for a performance about pirates, Pathways' staff developed the performance element of the curriculum. Lunchtime clubs, for example using the sensory

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garden, are very popular and allow pupils to choose how to spend their leisure time. All groups of staff know pupils extremely well and contribute to caring for them. For example, kitchen staff meet a wide range of specific dietary needs and tempt particular pupils to taste new foods. Detailed individual plans support aspects of development such as behaviour, ensuring consistency of approaches. The parent support adviser plays a key role in coordinating the support for pupils and their families, involving relevant agencies and professionals. Courses for parents and carers are as varied as possible, from 'Painting together' to 'An expert patient'. Home-school books and regular newsletters provide specific and general information. Pupils' introduction to the school and transition to secondary provision are tailored exceptionally closely to individuals' needs. As far as possible, pupils are helped to keep themselves safe, for example by learning to swim and being aware of traffic, and communicate their wishes.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has restructured the leadership team to include staff representing different groups. This means, for example, that those involved with managing the budget have a closer appreciation of the impact of financial decisions. Staff beyond the leadership team are encouraged to and willingly take on responsibilities. Teachers now have a more formal role in analysing the progress made by pupils in their classes, through meetings with the headteacher. There are clear plans to involve more leaders in monitoring the progress made by different groups across the school as the new assessment system is more firmly established. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has led to enhancements to the practice of individual teachers and the consistency of approaches. The school shares its expertise with others, contributing well to community cohesion. Its involvement with other community groups is increasing all the time, although the full impact of its work is not yet evident. Leaders work hard to see that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged. A small number of gifted and talented pupils has recently been identified and actions implemented to cater more specifically for their needs. This is clear evidence of the school's effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity for all. The governing body is very supportive and well informed. Newer governors are keen to develop their skills, attending a range of relevant training around topics such as safeguarding. Staff receive regular, good-quality training in this area and follow agreed procedures closely that fully meet requirements.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding leadership has ensured that the provision for children has developed well since the previous inspection. As a result, children now make outstanding progress, particularly in learning to communicate and in the area of personal, social and emotional development. Staff provide a careful balance of activities led by adults and opportunities for children to choose to play independently. The safe and secure outdoor area is used very well and children are regularly to be seen out and about in the community, during visits to the library or a supermarket. Detailed assessments enable support for individuals to be tailored extremely closely to each child's needs. Children are taught how to play, for example with water and bubbles, and are encouraged to make friends with others. They have thorough personal care plans, which detail the way in which children are helped to develop skills, such as taking off their shoes or putting food in their mouth. Parents' and carers' views contribute to the learning opportunities offered. For example, where a child has a particular obsession with or antipathy towards a certain type of activity or location, staff work to improve the situation, often using innovative approaches. Teamwork between staff is exceptionally strong and areas with scope for further improvement have been identified. These include the provision of a shaded area outside so children can work and play in the fresh air whatever the weather.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' views are very positive and nearly all reflect the findings of the inspection. The inspection judges that progress is outstanding overall, although the steps taken by some children are very small indeed. The home–school books checked by the inspector contained useful information. The school keeps a close eye on the contents of the books and provides a range of other opportunities for parents and carers to find out about what their children are learning. Leaders are aware that a few parents and carers seek more written communication and are to work with them to clarify their and the school's expectations.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wakefield Pathways 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 inspector received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 45 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	71	5	24	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	76	4	19	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	71	4	19	2	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	67	6	29	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	71	6	29	0	0	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)	14	67	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	86	3	14	0	0	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](http://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"><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.**



12 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wakefield Pathways School, Castleford, WF10 3QJ

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when I inspected your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work. The group of pupils who met me and talked about the school were very helpful. They told me that the school is 'brilliant'! I agree. It is an outstanding school. Here are some of the things it does best.

- You learn such a lot, because you have excellent teachers.
- The school takes the best possible care of you and that is why you feel so safe.
- You have lots of interesting things to do, in school and when you go out.
- You try hard to stay healthy, by eating well and doing lots of sport.
- You do plenty of jobs around school and help other people.
- Your headteacher and the staff keep making the school better and better.

I have asked the headteacher and the staff to do one more thing. I want them to make sure that all the teachers join in the job of checking that you are all learning as well as you can.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Rosemary Eaton

Lead inspector

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