

Cleaswell Hill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122382
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	380459
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Ann Muxworthy

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	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Lydon
Headteacher	Kevin Burdis
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons taught by 9 different teaching staff. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils of the school. The school's work was observed and policies, governing body minutes, school improvement targets, external reports, and pupils' progress were scrutinised. The inspectors took into account the findings from the 25 parental questionnaires and from questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The achievement of different groups of pupils to determine whether it is high enough.
- Whether the teaching and learning enable pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- The effectiveness with which leaders raise achievement and drive forward improvements.
- The success with which the school promotes good attendance.

Information about the school

Cleaswell Hill is an average-sized special school. The school provides for pupils aged from four to 16 years. The nature of the intake of pupils is changing significantly. Although the school includes pupils with a wide range of needs from moderate to severe learning difficulties, the vast majority of pupils arriving in recent years has complex additional needs. A small minority has autistic spectrum disorders alongside social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A small minority of pupils has experienced significant disruption in their education prior to joining the school. Most pupils are White British and a high proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. There are no speakers of English as an additional language. The school has successfully gained Intermediate International School Status.

A new leadership structure has been fully in place as of September 2011. From September 2007 the school has been working in partnership with a mainstream school to provide post-16 provision. This aspect of its work did not form part of the inspection.

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

Cleaswell Hill is a good school that is improving well. It does many important things very well. The commitment of all staff effectively supports the school's wish that 'we live, work and play together in peace and kindness'. Parents and carers are highly-appreciative of the school's caring ethos and the support their children receive. Typical of their comments is, 'The school is fantastic and has changed my child completely into a confident willing-to-learn child. It teaches him in a way he can understand and the support for parents and our child is excellent.'

Outcomes for pupils are good overall. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is excellent because they are highly-interested and have lots of fun in their learning. They make good progress from their individual starting points because teachers and other adults understand their needs and use assessment well. This is evident in the recently-introduced daily diaries. However, as recognised by the school, these do not yet focus sharply enough on capturing successful learning in order to identify next steps for planning and assessing pupil progress. The well-planned curriculum has some exceptional opportunities for learning based in practical situations. It is informed well by pupils' involvement in the planning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is at an early stage of development. The new leadership has focused well on developing provision, particularly the curriculum and assessment of children's progress, but has not yet developed a strategic plan to guide improvement of the provision.

The inspirational headteacher is supported well by the new leadership team which communicates its enthusiasm, sense of purpose and the school's caring ethos extremely well to pupils, parents and carers. Leaders have a strong focus on driving improvements in teaching and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is particularly evident in the rapid improvements to teaching and learning, and outstanding relationships with parents and carers. Leaders and managers have a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. This is because the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is rigorous, sharply focused and leads to secure improvements in achievement. However, systems for monitoring the broader work of the school are not yet as rigorous in pinpointing further priorities for improvement. Excellent partnerships effectively promote shared expertise between schools, health and local authority services. This leads to pupils' increased confidence, and ability to access their curriculum and participate in a range of social and educational settings. These factors give the school good capacity for continued and sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of monitoring further by:
 - giving new leaders the opportunities to make a stronger contribution to monitoring activities
 - ensuring the systems for monitoring the school's wider work are more rigorous in pinpointing priorities for development.
- Take further steps to ensure that assessment tools capture progress and inform next steps in learning, by:
 - ensuring diaries provide clear evaluative statements about pupils' progress that inform pupils' assessment profiles and lesson-planning.
- Develop the effectiveness of leaders' skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage to drive further improvements in provision through:
 - identifying a plan of developments for the provision and future needs
 - providing further leadership training and development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils greatly enjoy their school and make consistently good progress in their lessons when measured against their low individual starting points. They enjoy their learning and their behaviour in lessons is good and often better. The achievement of all groups of pupils, including those with autistic spectrum disorder, is good. Pupils do particularly well in developing their social, emotional and behavioural skills. This supports greater engagement in activities and acceptance of challenge to improve their learning. The small number of more-able pupils with less complex needs gains success in GCSE exams such as art and design and technology, usually with grades in the C to G range. This is supported by other recognised forms of success in Entry Level and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network awards. These results demonstrate how well pupils build on their prior learning and benefit from the cumulative effect of good-quality teaching.

Pupils are extremely happy and friendly towards each other and staff. The rare incidents of challenging behaviour that may interrupt learning are managed very effectively through the school's caring and skilled approach. Consequently, any disruption is minimal. Pupils gain important knowledge and skills to help them stay safe. The wider aspects of personal safety are supported through the high level of instruction on safety and this was done extremely well in science. Parents and carers strongly agree that their children feel happy and safe at school.

Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Their strong sense of school community has provided insightful ideas to support the design of the new school buildings and outside play areas. The school assemblies are legend and provide a dynamic focus which enables pupils to develop a good understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They say they are very happy and feel safe. They actively raise funds for charities and engage well with local schools in sporting activities. Pupils value the support given by adults and respond well when encouraged to be independent. For instance, the recent trip to York, and the increasing number of pupils using local transport, have supported and increased

confidence for independent travel. By the time pupils transfer to the school’s post-16 provision, college or employment they have benefitted from good opportunities to apply skills and abilities in a range of situations. The regular attendance of the majority of pupils, and the high level of interest for involvement in practical and creative experiences, prepare them well for making a contribution to their future well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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?

Teaching is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are engaged and motivated to learn. Relationships are excellent. Support staff make consistently strong contributions to teaching and learning, for instance, through providing signing support to communication, and teaching life skills. Teachers and support staff use a broad range of assessment well. However, the daily diaries do not yet include enough evaluation of individuals’ progress to help staff identify the next steps in learning and use this information when planning activities.

In good lessons teachers apply their specialist skills and knowledge well to motivate and challenge pupils to achieve their best. Some exceptional teaching was seen, in the teaching of mathematics and the linking of letters to the sounds they make, where pupils had excellent opportunities to reflect on their learning and develop their thinking. Questioning is used well to determine pupils' understanding of what is being taught and what they have remembered. Well-prepared classroom resources and practical activities provide engaging and exciting opportunities for learning.

The curriculum provides real, enriched and exciting experiences that contribute well to pupils’ development. The opportunity for pupils to contribute to the design of new topics, through providing questions they would like answered, makes the curriculum relevant to them. Self-esteem is positively promoted through the curriculum which places a strong emphasis on basic skills and contributes to pupils’ good development

¹The 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.

and well-being. Through highly-effective partnerships, experience in life skills and extra-curricular clubs, pupils can share excellent opportunities to develop their social skills.

The school has created a supportive and caring setting that successfully promotes learning and enjoyment in equal measure. Transition is very well supported through excellent partnerships and thoughtful preparation. The school has been proactive in ensuring excellent partnerships with parents, carers and agencies through communication and the recent website development is further supporting a high quality of sharing of information. As a result, although average, attendance is improving. This effective working together by staff, parents, carers and agencies ensures the well-being of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The highly-effective headteacher is confident in his vision for school improvement and is determined to drive through and secure nothing less than excellence for pupils. The new leadership team embraces these sentiments. Its members have a strong focus on continuous improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring systems for teaching and pupils' progress are rigorous and effective in identifying priorities for improving achievement. Monitoring of other areas of the school's work is not as sharply-focused in identifying further areas for improvement. New leaders are not yet making a full contribution to these monitoring activities. Leaders and managers listen to pupils' views and use them well to plan for the future. This can be seen in the most recent opportunity to design and plan new school play and outdoor areas. Realistic targets are in place for pupils' progress and improving attendance with the result that overall outcomes are good.

Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's priorities and have been instrumental and highly-supportive in developing the future vision for the school. The governing body includes a good range of skills, experience and expertise and fulfils its duties well in holding the school to account.

School leaders and governors act responsibly with regard to policies and procedures that relate to pupil and staff safety. Risk assessments ensure that any potential risk is minimised. Child protection systems are of a good quality. The school ensures that there is a good range of experiences to promote pupils' equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination. The school tracks the progress of every child very closely so that provision is tightly-targeted and leads to success. Outstanding partnerships with local schools, health professionals, local authority services, colleges and the wider community make an excellent contribution to the achievements and well-being of pupils. Excellent engagement with parents and carers and highly-positive

relationships ensure effective support for pupils and their families. The school is a highly-sociable community which provides pupils with rich experiences of its local community and a good level of understanding of its wider community. Staff and resources are well-deployed to support pupils' needs.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

A new leader has recently been appointed to cater for the needs of the single pupil in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This new leadership has focused well on changes to the curriculum and the assessment of children's progress but has had insufficient time or training to develop a strategic plan to drive through further improvements in provision. Although curriculum planning is based on the best practice for very young children, the restricted resources place some limits on children's progress. A satisfactory range of learning spaces has been developed to allow children to learn through exploration and play. Adults are well-deployed to support children's learning and welfare. They play a highly-important role in observing and recording the very small signs of progress each child makes. Previous children admitted at this very early age are amongst the most vulnerable in the school. All are making at least the expected rate of progress, including those who have communication and learning needs. On-going observations are now collated and incorporated into a Foundation Stage Profile for each child, thus creating a systematic record of progress. The good regard to children's welfare and care, guidance and support, as found in the rest of the school, is clearly evident.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Around 20% of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Those who did were extremely positive about the school's provision and the outcomes it achieves. Informing them of their children making progress, their child enjoying school and being happy, healthy and safe, were rated particularly highly. This comment is typical, 'Great school, good atmosphere, excellent, caring, well-trained staff and the headteacher is very good.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cleaswell Hill 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 116 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	52	8	32	3	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	68	7	28	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	72	4	16	3	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	60	10	40	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	56	8	32	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	76	4	16	2	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	52	10	40	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	60	9	36	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	80	4	16	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	72	6	24	1	4	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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100. Sixth-form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cleaswell Hill School, Choppington, NE62 5DJ

Thank you so much for being so kind and helpful when the inspectors visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and thoroughly enjoyed seeing your lessons and other activities. It was a pleasure to talk about your experiences and the things you do in school, especially how many times you told us you had fun. So many of you told us how much you like your teachers. Your views were very positive, particularly about how well you are now doing and that you want to go on to upper school or college to get more qualifications.

Cleaswell Hill is a good school and has some outstanding aspects. You make good progress because you are taught well. You have good opportunities to lead healthy lives because of the sports and other exciting activities you do in school. These are keeping you very active, healthy and well. Your headteacher, staff and governors work extremely hard to make sure your school is the best it can be. We have asked your headteacher to find even better ways to check things are working well so that everything runs smoothly for you. We have also asked the staff to write down more things about how well you learn to help you do even better.

It is very clear that you enjoy school and feel safe. You are very well cared for, guided and supported and behave well. We were particularly impressed that you visit places such as York and Dukeshouse Wood and have fun. Your school may have some more young children in the future so we have asked your headteacher to plan some new things for them so they can learn as well as you. Well done with your ideas for raising money as this is helping you think of others and preparing you well for when you leave school. We wish you continued success.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Muxworthy
Lead Inspector

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